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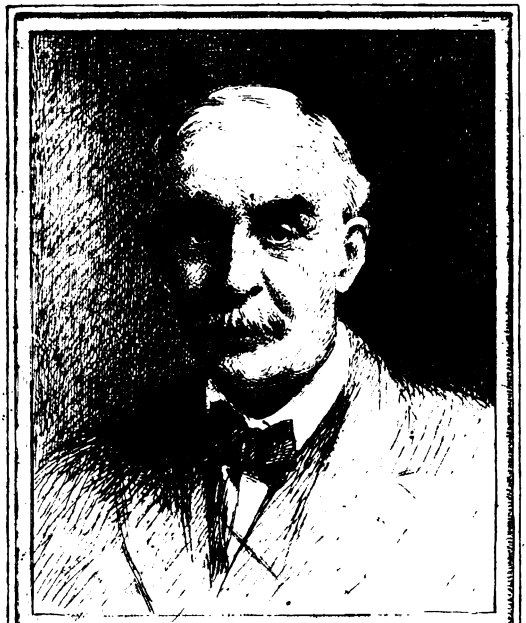

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MEMORIALS

OF THE LATE

REV. ANDREW CRICHTON.

MEMORIALS

OF THE LATE

REV. ANDREW CRICHTON, B.A.

OF EDINBURGH AND DUNDEE.

EDITED BY

WILLIAM G. BLAIKIE, D.D.

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PREFACE.

THE chief difficulty I have had in editing this Volume has been that of selecting and leaving out. This difficulty has been felt especially in regard to the Sermons, of which Mr. Crichton had written nearly three hundred, all complete from first to last, and with hardly a single correction or erasure. In the selection made, I have been greatly assisted by my much valued friend, the Rev. Robert Taylor; and in making our choice we have tried to give a sample of our friend's mode of handling *fundamental* truths, as in some of the Sermons that come first; of his mode of handling *favourite* topics, such as the Incarnation, and the Oneness of Christ and His people; of his Lectures and serial Discourses, such as that entitled 'El-Elohe-Israel,' one of a series on the Old Covenant, and that entitled 'Fruit or

Fuel,' one of a series on our Lord's farewell discourse; of Sermons on special occasions, such as that on 'The Aloneness of Christ's Salvation,' preached at the ordination of the Rev. David Somerville; and of Sermons to the times, such as that on Natural Law and Divine Discipline. To these we have added the last Sermon preached to his own congregation, 'Members of Christ;' and two Sermons—on death, and on life in heaven—which, independently of their intrinsic beauty and value, may be said almost to form part of Mr. Crichton's mental biography. The reader must remember that not one of these discourses was written with a view to publication, and that, with the exception of a few trifling corrections made after they were in type, they are precisely the same as the author wrote them.

In selecting the other portions of the volume, I have endeavoured to give a fair and true representation of Mr. Crichton's views on the subjects on which he thought most and felt most. Whether the reader may approve of every paper, or concur with every sentiment or not, he will,

I think, find a truthful picture of Mr. Crichton's mind, by taking the sermons and the other pieces together, and viewing each as supplementary of the rest.

For myself, I cannot but add that the additional insight I have obtained, while preparing this Volume, into Mr. Crichton's character and work, has raised him higher than ever in my esteem and affection. His removal in the midst of such work and such prospects of service is more mysterious than ever. I must express my regret that the duty of preparing a Memorial Volume did not fall into other hands. My time is so much filled up with other duties that nothing but my very high regard for Mr. Crichton, and the feeling that the request which was made to me by some of his friends ought, in almost any circumstances, to be complied with, could have induced me to accept so delicate and sacred a charge. This circumstance may not excuse, but will at least account for the editorial imperfections of the present Volume.

W. G. BLAIKIE.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

ANDREW CRICHTON was born at St. Andrews, Fife, on the 22d of May 1837. His father, the Rev. David Crichton, was at that time English master in the Madras College, but in the following year he received the appointment of minister of Inverbrothock, in the town of Arbroath, whither he removed with his family in December 1838. In 1843, Mr. Crichton, who had all along maintained the principles of the Evangelical party, threw in his lot with the Free Church of Scotland. His son was hardly old enough to retain a distinct recollection of this memorable event in public and family history, but he was quite capable of being influenced by the spirit of that remarkable time. There can be little doubt that his character received strong impressions, though he himself might not be aware of it, from his growing up amid the intense emotions and prodigious efforts of the Disruption era.

The ruins of the old Abbey of Arbroath carry back the imagination to the past, while the spin-

ning-mills and long chimneys, which have become prominent features of the town during the present century, represent the sober realities of modern business life. Both influences blended in the formation of Andrew Crichton's character. The stirring life of a seaport town had also, probably, a quickening effect on him. The view of the German Ocean from Arbroath is magnificent, and were there nothing else to stimulate the youthful imagination, the Bell-Rock Lighthouse alone, so suggestive of ancient legends and of modern enterprise, might prove a 'meet nurse for a poetic child.' If anything were needed to show how Andrew Crichton's imagination was stirred by the grand sight on which his boyish eyes so often looked out, his last piece of composition would be an interesting evidence of the fact. The reader of this Memoir will find in the proper place some beautiful lines, pencilled during one of the sleepless nights of his last illness, full of the imagery of the sea, representing too truly the tossing of his weary body, but sweetly welcoming the haven which faith saw beyond.

Manse life and manse influences are too well known in Scotland to need any elaborate description. Of all homes, the manse appears one of the best for developing family affection and healthful energy. The children are so much in contact with the parents and with one another,

and see and hear so much of the parental labours and anxieties, joys and sorrows, as to feel as if all in a measure were their own. Pervaded by a wholesome activity and Christian earnestness, the manse has little tolerance for idleness and self-indulgence in any of its inmates; and if the society that gathers round it be somewhat one-sided, representing rather largely the keen clerical spirit, it at least includes in most instances a proportion of the excellent of the earth,—of the noblest and most devoted of Christian men and women, and is well fitted, under God's blessing, to foster the spirit, 'not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.'

Under such wholesome and godly influences Andrew Crichton grew up, and as in the case of John Foster and many others, piety from the very beginning 'mingled almost insensibly with his feelings,' so that no record remains of any decided religious change to mark the commencement of his Christian life. To his eldest sister, indeed, he once stated explicitly, when speaking of the darkness and struggles through which some pass in coming to the Saviour, that he himself had known no such experience. Neither does there seem to have been any particular time when he resolved on devoting himself to the ministry. His feelings from the earliest period appear to have turned in that direction,

and when on one occasion, on his leaving home to attend college, and compete for a bursary to which the condition of studying for the ministry was attached, his father cautioned him not to enter the lists unless his heart was really inclined to the sacred office, his reply indicated that for a long time his mind on that matter had been quite made up.

His elementary education was received chiefly at the Free Church Educational Institution at Arbroath, which was subsequently amalgamated with 'the Academy,' under the name of the 'High School.' It will be obvious to every one that he must have derived no little benefit from having had his literary instruction superintended by his father, himself a practised teacher, as in the higher aspects of the term *education* it was a still greater advantage to be under such earnest Christian influences as he experienced at home. In the annual prize-list of the Institution his name usually occupied a high place.

Having obtained one of the competition bursaries in 1852 at the University of Edinburgh, he proceeded to join that renowned institution in the sixteenth year of his age. It may be mentioned here that about three years afterwards there was projected, chiefly under his auspices, and carried into effect mainly by his perseverance, one of those family manuscript magazines, which often

enliven middle-class homes, bearing the title, 'The Manse Journal.' It was the product of 'the family pen,' but Andrew was its mainstay and chief contributor. Eight quarto pages, double columns, written as closely as small print, in a clear, beautiful hand, and with remarkable neatness, coming out monthly, and continued for two or three years, was a characteristic proof of that love of composition, and singular aptness for it, that distinguished him in after years. The whole journal has a character of its own: a very solid substratum of useful knowledge, a considerable amount of Bible summary and illustration, a fair proportion of sketches and boyish rambles, and a few touches, here and there, of poetry and sentiment. In some of these sketches there is a good deal of his own biography. The eldest son of the family, when he went to Edinburgh, liked to interest the younger members in all that he saw in the old metropolis, and drew for them, in the columns of the Manse Journal, pictures of student life in all its aspects, sketches of his first excursions to Glasgow and other places, of Duddingstone Loch frozen over, and alive with the whole skating population of Edinburgh, or of his rambles with his friends among the Pentland Hills. In one of these sketches he graphically describes the excitement and bustle in the parental home as the boy-student prepares to leave; the

accumulation of stockings, the making of shirts, the packing of boxes, not only with such dry goods as these, but with many home-made dainties, cakes and jars of jam, which will have an indescribable charm in home-sick hours in the lonely Edinburgh lodging. The tender leave-taking is over, and the student is dashing along the rails 'with a bounding heart, proud of its new position, swelling with noble resolve and high determination, taking its first step into the wilderness of life with bright visions dancing before it.' He steps out of the conveyance into the great town, where, wandering through crowded streets and moving masses of men, among whom he can discover no familiar face, an indescribable sense of loneliness comes over him, which deepens into thorough home-sickness when he has had a little experience of his lodgings. 'Well for him,' concludes the writer, 'if when earth has failed, he can look to heaven, and behold there a heavenly Father and Friend. Well for him if the thought of One who is ever present can diffuse a holy calm on his troubled spirit. A light breaks in on his soul, and illumines its darkness. The voice of a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother whispers comfort in his ear. There is hope for him. No need for the despairing cry, "All alone in the wide world—alone!"'

If the limits of this biographical sketch were

not necessarily small, copious extracts might be given from the 'glimpses of student life' in the Manse Journal; but instead of presenting a few mutilated clippings, I think it better to give one of them entire, in the selection from Mr. Crichton's papers and essays, having for its subject 'College Friendships.' It is not only an excellent picture of one of the most characteristic things in Edinburgh college life, but a specimen of the remarkable ease in expression which Mr. Crichton had attained even at so early an age as eighteen.

Mr. Crichton entered into the work of the University of Edinburgh with the greatest diligence, and the four years he spent there were years of remarkable and most successful application to study. In his second session he obtained the 'Miller Scholarship,' the competition for which is very keen, and the examination very thorough. In Professor Aytoun's class he gained the prize for poetry, the subject of his verses being 'Pompeii.' In the Moral Philosophy class he obtained the gold medal, with a fellow-student who was bracketed along with him. In 1856 he gained, by competition, in response to a public advertisement, a prize of thirty pounds offered by Gray's Trustees, for an essay on the difference between ancient and modern civilisation. But the story of his college life will be told much better in the words of one of his most intimate

friends, Mr. Maurice Paterson, now Rector of the Free Church Training-College in Edinburgh. Mr. Paterson's recollections are so interesting, that though they carry us a little beyond the period at which we are now arrived, we give them entire :—

'In all his classes Mr. Crichton held a high place. In Mathematics and Natural Philosophy he was not so distinguished, though he gained, I think, a certificate of merit in each of these classes. He had no great liking for Mathematics, so that his position was all the more creditable. In the Classics he dwelt upon and appreciated more than most of his fellow-students the *literary* excellencies of the authors he was studying. He did not undervalue accuracy of scholarship, but it was considered subservient to the higher purpose of bringing out the author's meaning and making one more fully to understand the precision and beauty of his style.

'He did not, I believe, join any of the celebrated debating clubs connected with the University. He was diffident of his own power of speaking before others, and never, I think, in this department took a very high place. Its importance, however, he distinctly recognised, and in order to improve himself joined first a debating society connected with Lady Glenorchy's congregation, which at this time invited all young

men connected with the Free Church to be members, and embraced a number of other students. During the summer of 1855 also he was a member, and for a time president, of a small society which met in the New College. The comparative privacy of these societies he valued much, and often spoke of the benefit which he felt he had received in them. In extemporaneous speaking Mr. Crichton did not excel, but his essays were confessedly unsurpassed. One on Mary Queen of Scots, and another on the Admirable Crichton, took all the members by surprise. Those who had known him only by the few words which he spoke in the course of a debate were not prepared for the beautiful pictures, drawn in the most elegant language, which were rapidly brought up before them in both of these papers. The remark of one of our number, made with a peculiar Highland accent, which was a standing subject of merriment, was that the images were "perfectly ravishing."

'The amiability of his character came out in our debates and criticisms. He seemed almost by an instinct to seize on those parts of a paper or a speech which he could approve. He dwelt on these, spoke of them in the strongest language he could, and let other things go. To anything like petty criticism he had the strongest aversion. An essay which had pleased him for elegance of

style, or originality, or vigour of thought, he could scarcely bear to hear criticised. A remark he once made, when we were discussing the question of inspiration, after he had attended a year at the Divinity Hall, was verified in his practice, "I always like to look at the sunny side of things."

'His reading all the time I knew him was most extensive. He had read much before he came to college, and in spite of his hard work there his reading in general literature seems never to have been interrupted. When I came to know this fully, I often wondered how he managed to take so high a place in his classes, when, besides his college work, he was at the same time maintaining himself by teaching. Probably this collateral reading, which he never gave up, by refreshing and stimulating his powers, served in part to contribute to his success.

'The author of whom in those days he spoke most was, I think, Carlyle. He had read all or most of his published works, and never wearied of talking of them. Some of his more striking utterances were frequently the subject of conversation. At a later period, he said, I think, that he had read all of Carlyle's works twice over. Kingsley also was a favourite at this time. Tennyson's 'In Memoriam' was then an unfailing source of pleasure. Much of it, as well as of the works of his other favourite poets, he seemed to

have by heart. He was able so thoroughly to make the spirit of his authors his own, that it cost him comparatively little effort to retain their language in his memory. De Quincey, Ruskin, Professor Wilson, Barrett Browning, were also favourite authors.

'I have always thought that it contributed materially to his success in all the stages of his career, that from a very early period he had fixed his profession, and was able to make all his studies and occupations converge on preparation for it. One accomplishment which he prized very highly was ease and elegance of composition, and this faculty he cultivated from his earliest years. I remember seeing, when I visited him at Arbroath, a volume of what was called the Manse Magazine, containing contributions in prose and verse from himself and other members of his family, which was bound up and perused by intimate friends. He maintained his interest in and contributed to the Magazine even during his college work.

'I have always thought that the calibre of his mind might have been greater even than it was, if he had been somewhat less averse to dealing with those more difficult subjects, or, at least, in their more difficult aspects, with which a student of philosophy or theology has to deal. Not only did he dislike the discussion of all purely

metaphysical questions, but in many cases where the decision seemed to turn on points of some difficulty, and to demand close reasoning, he seemed rather to avoid them. Probably, however, he had the faculty of seeing these things in a way that satisfied his own mind as to the truth, and in illustrating them his power was unsurpassed.

'During the first year or two of his student life he sat in one of the churches in the New Town. Afterwards he joined the High Church congregation, thus enjoying the ministry of Dr. Rainy. He frequently referred to the profit as well as enjoyment he had derived from Dr. Rainy's ministrations, and often thanked me as having been the means of leading him to that congregation.

'At the time that I first knew him his mind was already set on the ministry as that which was to be the occupation of his life. He looked forward to the time when he should be engaged in it, with bright anticipations. To be able to influence large numbers of people for good, and lead them to the Saviour, I remember his saying, was his highest ambition, and an object which he felt worthy of all his efforts to accomplish well. It was with fear and trembling that he approached the discharge of public duty for the first time, as, I understand, was also his experience for many

years after he had been engaged in the work. I was with him in Arbroath when he preached his first sermon to a regular congregation in a large church. It was to the children, at the request of friends. His father's church was crowded in every part. The subject, I think, was the young Samuel, and was treated with great power, though not perhaps in all its parts quite suitably for children. The afternoon before the service was a very painful one. He was sick and in great discomfort, and needed, I remember, to avail himself of the assistance of a friend and myself on his way to church in the evening. None who heard him in the pulpit could have guessed that he had passed through such an ordeal before he entered it. All along he was diffident and retiring. In the college classes his voice was scarcely ever heard, and it was only when the result of class examinations or of essays was announced that his talents became known to many of his class-fellows.

'In his later years I found him more and more impressed with the magnitude of the work on which he had entered, and unceasingly earnest that all, especially young men, should help forward the same cause for which he was labouring. On one of the last occasions on which I saw him he spoke earnestly of the responsibility which lay on the young men with reference to the advance-

ment of the kingdom of God in Scotland, and longed for their drawing more together for consultation, encouragement, and mutual help. To myself, as professionally interested in the education of the young, it is pleasing to remember that the last utterance which I heard from him in public, was a solemn declaration that in his Sabbath services the children should be more frequently remembered, and a call to his brethren of the Presbytery to do likewise.

'It can, perhaps, serve little purpose for me to dwell on the warmth of his affection as a friend, his generosity of spirit, and unfailing kindness. There was no pride of superiority, rather an underestimating of himself, and assigning the place of superiority to others. I never knew any one in whom such implicit confidence could be placed.'

Entering the New College of the Free Church at Edinburgh in 1856, Mr. Crichton passed through the usual four years' curriculum of theological study. He went through all the classes with his usual conscientious diligence and determination to draw all the water he could from every fountain of instruction, yet not without traces of that feeling of weariness which so long a curriculum imposes even on the best of students. In writing to his friend Paterson after the first

session, he says, after alluding to the four classes which he had attended :—

'Besides college work, I had to refurbish and increase my German ; for I will have to teach it. This cost me trouble and time, for the last three months especially. Moreover, I was gaining practice in professional work. I had a prayer-meeting in Fountainbridge, chiefly of old wives and bairns, once a fortnight. My success was gratifying, so far as outward appearances were concerned. In this connexion, I may tell what else I have been doing ministerially. There is a place called Coltbridge, a mile or so from the west end of Princes Street, where I held forth twice on Sabbath evenings, and the second time had the satisfaction of drawing a crowd, though it was a fearful night of rain. Really you will think me conceited and vain-glorious ; but if you saw me go shivering to one of these appearances, and knew with what fear and trembling I spoke, you would soon be disabused of the idea. When I went over in greatest depression, without a rag of confidence to cover the nakedness which I felt, I was strangely strengthened and carried on with fluency and vigour, and with pleasure and success which God seems always to give to self-abnegation and implicit dependence on the help that comes from above. . . .

'You will see my name among the B.A.'s. I

meant to go up for M.A., and in fact went to the Natural Philosophy examination, but had to leave, for I got very sick; and certainly the hardness of the paper added to my confusion. I had been foolish enough to sit up the previous night—a Sabbath night too—beginning at twelve o'clock; and so in the morning I disgorged my breakfast, and went a sort of giddy to the examination, so that, after a little while, there came rebellious risings in my stomach, and I had to go out. For this misfortune I console myself with the reflection that I would have been plucked at any rate. I suppose you and I will have the pleasure of sympathizing with each other next year when we go up for M.A.'

The letter from which the above extract is made is dated, 'Kincardine Castle, near Auchterarder,' and begins by explaining how, at the close of the session, he had accepted the office of tutor, during the recess, in the family of the late Captain Grove, R.N.

'If you have looked at the heading of my letter you will think I have been getting up in the world at a wonderful rate, when I start with so consequential a superscription. Well, the fact is, that I am installed as tutor here, and am busied with the instruction of two young gentlemen, both of them not much younger, and one of them as big as myself; both, too, students of one

year's standing at Glasgow College. The house and grounds appertaining thereunto, the latter consisting mainly of a beautiful glen that wanders up the course of a stream for two or three miles, are among the loveliest in Scotland. Captain Grove is a splendid man, most intelligent, well-read, and sensible, and also very kind to me. Mrs. Grove very much the same sort of character cast in a feminine mould. My pupils take after their parents. They have been brought up with very great care, something like the K.'s, and, like them, with rather too much of the hot-house training. They want very much the world-discipline which you and I have had. It is all very agreeable for me, for anything like rude behaviour or disobedience, or even inattention to the work which I prescribe, belong to an abyss of horror of whose very existence they do not dare to dream. . . .

'I am painting in rose-colour, and the glow of the picture may be ascribed to the fervour of first impressions, for I have not completed my first week. Be it so. The brightness of this line may tone down a little, but it will not fade. The people will wear well, if I am not mistaken, and even improve on acquaintance. There was nothing of the rose-colour in my feelings when I came, for they were sombre as the day itself, and it was the warm welcome, and the kind voice and manner, which thawed the ice that had begun to

sphere about my heart, and send my affections in upon themselves, to dwine and grow cold, or stretch with a vain longing to friends and scenes and faces beyond their reach.'

It is very pleasant to add, that the esteem and affection so cordially expressed towards the family of Kincardine Castle were thoroughly reciprocated. Captain Grove has passed from this world, as well as the youthful instructor of his sons; but Mrs. Grove has kindly furnished me with so interesting a notice of Mr. Crichton's residence in her family, that I make no apology for giving it entire:—

'During the two years and upwards that Mr. Crichton was under our roof, while he discharged his duties as tutor to my two sons conscientiously and faithfully, he was also their kind friend and companion, and we regarded him always as a most pleasant addition to our family circle; his kind and affectionate nature, his gentlemanlike deportment, combined with a most consistent Christian life, won the respect and affection of all. He was an ardent admirer of nature, and often he, with his pupils, would start at two in the morning, and walk six or eight miles to see the sun rise from the neighbouring mountains, and return in an ecstasy, telling us how much we had missed.

'Mr. Crichton's influence extended beyond our roof. At the suggestion of Captain Grove, he opened a meeting for prayer and exposition on Sunday evenings. He was at first much discouraged by the small attendance, but after a few weeks, the room was well filled. His addresses there were short, pointed, and well adapted to the class who regularly attended; and I know of more than one who now look back with much thankfulness to these weekly meetings; his manner was so affable, and always a kind word ready to those who shook his hand and thanked him for his faithful words. Many a visit he paid to the poor and afflicted, and to this day they will tell the text, or advice he left with them.

'While the church was vacant here, he preached pretty frequently, and was listened to with deep interest. His was a style peculiar to himself; his illustrations very original; his way of opening up Bible truths very simple, which produced a strong impression on the people; and had he been in a position to take a charge, there can be no doubt he would have been called here. He was particularly attractive to young men; several of whom settling in Edinburgh, sought out Mr. Crichton, that they might have the benefit of his ministrations, and by whom they were admitted as members into the New North Church. Wherever he thought he could be of use, he was willing to

give his spare time, and with that modesty and diffidence that characterized all he did. When a minister in Edinburgh, and while suffering much from impaired health and spirits, we asked him here, hoping he would recruit (a hope which was gratified). Mr. Milne asked him to take his work on Sunday. It was with thankfulness and delight we listened: he had made rapid advances in spirituality of mind and Christian experience; and many then made the remark, as they looked at the worn countenance, that he was fast ripening for another world. His early death was much felt by many here; and during his last illness, many a prayer was offered for him, that his life might yet be spared.

'In Mr. Crichton's death my sons feel they have lost a friend; one who was always interested in their well-being both for time and eternity.'

The last of his student summers was spent at Woolton, in Derbyshire, where he had charge of a small mission congregation, fostered under the auspices of Mr. and Mrs. Bannerman.

Mr. Crichton's health was not robust during his stay at Woolton, but a very pleasing recollection of him still lingers in the minds of all who were brought in contact with him. His powers as a spiritual guide must have been in the most immature state, and doubtless there were qualities

almost entirely wanting which were supplied by further ministerial experience and by the growth of his Christian character. There could hardly fail to be more of the student than of the pastor in his addresses and services, for the long curriculum of study tends in the first instance to carry young ministers into a sort of imaginary intellectual world which has little or no contact with actual life; and it is only after some experience, often painful enough, that the mental power gained at college becomes practically serviceable for the work of the ministry. Mr. Crichton endeared himself to the villagers by his sympathy and kindness of heart, and was admired by the more cultivated part of his charge for his versatility of talent, and the exquisite poetry in which he clothed his thoughts. They saw in him the germs of a true minister of Christ, fully furnished for every good work; but the ripe fruit could not be expected at the very commencement of his career.

While his summers were thus employed, and the interstices of time filled up with contributions to the 'Manse Journal' and the Arbroath newspapers, his winters were very laboriously spent. No man could have more thoroughly trained himself 'to scorn delights and live laborious days.' One session, for example, he resided as tutor in a boarding establishment at Canonmills, and be-

sides attending classes, and doing some duty at the house, he walked every evening to Morningside, a couple of miles off, and taught there three hours. By ten o'clock when he got back, he was necessarily very tired, but would often take four hours of study before going to bed. At the time, he only complained of being a little fagged; but there can be little doubt now that such incessant labours impaired his constitution, and it is possible they may have sown the seeds of the fatal malady which a few years after so prematurely ended his career. At least, they must have had something to do with the languid look which in latter years became almost habitual, and with a certain sickliness of tone that occasionally appeared in his sermons, as if the mind had for the time caught infection from the body.

Whether it was that physically and mentally he was exhausted, or that the classes and lectures in the New College were too numerous, or both, it is certain that he found it heavy work before the end. 'We are jogging on slowly at the New College,' he writes in January 1859; 'working a little, waiting chiefly till the years wear themselves out to the end of the curriculum.' But this weariness did not arise from want of interest in the work for which he was preparing, or in the studies in which he was so ably guided. 'There is a good deal of religious fervour,' he continues,

'among us in the New College. It is, however, grave and manly withal, and in many ways helpful. One of its manifestations is the maintenance of a daily prayer-meeting at two o'clock when the classes are over.'

Next year he writes even more strongly, complaining that the opening of the Glasgow College had so lessened the numbers, and impaired the spirit of the Edinburgh Hall, that they had 'passed out of the gate by a common impulse, to warm themselves at the busy human life without, feeling the practical working of the truth which fell on them within, to be very monotonous and dead.' While he thus felt and wrote, he was at the same time affording brilliant evidence of the good use he had made of all the instruction he had received, and of the diligence and success with which he had prosecuted every branch of study prescribed by the Church. At the Exit Board examination through which he passed on completing his studies at the New College, the number of marks he received for his papers was remarkably high,—perhaps the highest for the year, though of this I am not quite certain.

In the Missionary Association of the New College he took a most lively interest, and was, in fact, one of its chief pillars.

Consequently, in his fourth session, he had gained a good claim to the honorary post of

president. It so happened, however, that a very dear friend of his, now the Rev. Charles G. M'Crie of Blairgowrie, had a similar claim. The subjoined extract from a letter of Mr. Crichton's to his friend on the subject is very characteristic. It shows his frank, manly nature, looking the delicate question that was sure to come up full in the face, and recognising both his own claims and those of his friend; while at the same time he was quite willing to yield to him the palm of honour, and quite determined that in whatever way the matter went, it should make no difference to their friendship:—

'FREE INVERBROTHOCK MANSE,
ARBROATH, *Nov.* 3, 1859.

'MY DEAR M'CRIE,—. . . I am turning over in my mind the affairs of the Missionary Association, which you and I have in joint tutelage. . . . I am rather anxious and uncomfortable about the Presidentship. Reasoning from the analogy of previous years, it seems likely to hover between you and me; and so I wish to be frank with you about it, lest the election, whichever way it fell, might leave us distrustful of each other. My feeling is just this,—that I should rejoice to see you in the chair, because it would save me from having a duty to discharge which I should feel to be not only difficult, but positively painful,—but if I myself were chosen, I would feel it

my duty to quench all such feelings, and make up my mind to it with fear and trembling; not because the office seems desirable, but because any declining of it after election, even by a narrow majority, would cause great awkwardness, and indeed bring matters to a dead-lock, for no man would assume the office after it had been declined by another. I wish to set this last consideration before you, for you are rather a sufferer from diffidence, and I am anxious that in the event of your election, you should make no bones about it. If you declined it, I could not take it; for that would imply that I felt myself fit when you did not, which to myself and everybody would be a manifest piece of intolerable arrogance. The same thing obtains with regard to everybody else. Accordingly, I am anxious to have you agree with me in these views,—that if the office falls to either of us, it must be silently assumed, —and that the one to whom it does not come, will feel it to be a deliverance.

'I think you will understand my object in this letter. I can say solemnly, that in my own soul, I feel that you are a fitter man,—and as solemnly that I have not the faintest idea which of us shall be chosen; the only thing apparent to me being that we have both so served the society, and been so influential in it, as to make it likely that it will be one or other of us. Hence my perplexity

and my explanation. If you had not been so much and so intimately my friend, and if I had been less sensitive with regard to your feelings towards me, I should have cared little whatever happened; but my heart feels knit to yours as the heart of Jonathan to David, and so any wound which you should receive would rankle within me, and the thought, I doubt not, that I was hurt and suffering, would cause you great distress.—Your affectionate friend,

'ANDREW CRICHTON.'

Mr. Crichton was himself elected to the office.

It will be seen from preceding notices that before he was formally licensed as a preacher—which he was by the Free Presbytery of Arbroath in June 1860—he had on various occasions done the work of an evangelist, and discoursed to audiences of greater or less dimensions. It had accordingly become known that his powers as a preacher were of no ordinary kind, and the promise of expansion and improvement was very great. Accordingly, though he had only completed his twenty-third year, on the very first Sunday after he became a licentiate of the Free Church, he entered on the duty of assistant to the Rev. Charles J. Brown, now Dr. Brown, of the New North Free Church, Edinburgh. A few months later, he was called to be colleague of

the Rev. James Lewis, of St. John's, Leith, but the other congregation were anxious to secure his permanent services, and, on being also called by them, he gave the preference to their invitation, and was ordained as co-pastor in December 1860. In this charge he continued for rather more than five years. The penetrating mind of Dr. Brown had clearly apprehended his remarkable combination of gifts and graces, and had laid great stress on that capacity of growth and expansion which seemed sure to compensate for his youth and inexperience. Hardly any position could have been more trying for a student of twenty-three than to be placed side by side with a venerable father, who had acquired an unrivalled reputation as an analyst of the workings of the human soul, and an expounder of the deeper and more spiritual meanings of the Word of God, and whose congregation had been largely formed through appreciation of this power. The strong personal regard and affection of Dr. Brown—a regard and affection uniformly and cordially manifested on all subsequent occasions—had no small influence in determining the choice of the congregation in favour of Mr. Crichton, and establishing their confidence in him as a suitable pastor.

It is no small testimony to Mr. Crichton's spiritual earnestness, his winning spirit, and his remarkable gifts as a preacher, to say that pro-

bably no other young man of twenty-three would have succeeded so well in a similar position. A young and inexperienced colleague has always a difficult post. But as Mr. Crichton became known, he became more appreciated, and his influence was beginning to become very telling just when his removal from Edinburgh occurred. For the young, and especially for young men, he had great attractions. Devout, spiritual, earnest, and evangelical, he had withal a simplicity and transparency of character that drew their interest and gained their confidence, while his sympathy, his charity, his love of beauty, his naturalness, more and more commended him as their guide. There was a substratum of Christian earnestness, directness, and practicalness, that was fitted especially to gain the confidence of the older members; and a touch of sentiment, a gleam of poetry, and a dash of enthusiasm, not less adapted to take hold of the young.

But the character and quality of his Edinburgh ministrations will be best learned from the testimony of Dr. Brown, given with the greatest cordiality in the funeral sermon preached on occasion of his death:—

'And now, I have simply no words to tell, either the deep affection I came to entertain for him, or the enjoyment I had, both in my whole connexion with him as my colleague, and in all

his pulpit and other ministerial work and labours. How I did with my whole heart use to relish his lectures and his sermons, not for their intellectual character only, but for their usefulness to my own soul, and every day give God thanks that I had ever found such a colleague!

'As to the high opinion I formed of Mr. Crichton's preaching, it is no doubt possible—though I am scarce aware of it—that I might be unconsciously influenced, in part, by perceiving in it the materials, the seeds and elements, of yet higher things. But, although it is very true that there *were* those seeds and elements in it, yet I found no lack *at the time*—no immaturity that presented itself to my mind; but, on the contrary, I felt as if I could scarce wish for anything richer, or more useful to myself, than I actually got Sabbath after Sabbath.

'There were two qualities in Mr. Crichton's preaching, considered more intellectually, which I will venture to mark—and the rather, that they belonged equally to his writings for the press. In the first place, a certain peculiar and delightful *freshness*. I may perhaps be allowed to mention, in illustration, that he was pleased more than once to say to me that he found himself indebted to me for not a few valued lines of thought in different departments of Scripture teaching. Well; I knew that he was above the

vice of flattery, and spoke only what he regarded as the simple truth. And yet I could never have discovered, from his preaching, that he owed to me a single idea, a single line or turn of thought. For, somehow, if the thing went *into* his soul as mine it was very sure to come out thoroughly his. As it passed through his alembic, so to speak, it took a wholly new shape and form—so assimilating itself (to change the figure a little) with his own spirit, that, even as respects the thoughts, and much more the language, and clothing of them, it had become *all his own.* He had a mind, in short, a manner of thinking, writing, speaking, quite his own—which thus, of course, might not suit everybody alike—it suited *me*—but at all events it was entirely Mr. Crichton's own.

'Then, the other quality was a high *pictorial power,* which appeared almost equally in his expositions and in his sermons. Some, no doubt, might regard this as of more value for the press than for the pulpit—that is a matter of taste and opinion. But I am desirous to note this, as to Mr. Crichton's pictorial power, that it was not with him any sitting down to produce what is called fine writing by dint of slow elaboration. The thing was *a nature* with him. It cost him scarcely any labour. Not only had he a rare faculty of easy writing in general, but those beautiful descriptive passages were penned by him

with a quite native ease, and with hardly an erasure or blot on his page.

'And this, again, came very much out of a noble quality of his mind—an intense and thoroughly inbred *love of nature*—a keen eye for nature, and soul for it. He rejoiced not in God's blessed word only, but in His fair and beauteous works and world too. I learned a touching fact bearing on this, a fortnight ago, from her who was nearest to him on earth—that, while ministering at Dundee, in far from robust health, as they took little drives occasionally into the country for his benefit, or as he gazed occasionally on the ocean, he would break out in an admiration of the scenes before him so very deep as almost to alarm her, especially as he more than once would say, "Surely I am not to have this excessive joy long; I'm taking my fill of it,"—or to that effect.

'Then, intimately connected with his intense love of nature, was a certain *healthful*, naturally healthful, *style and character of mind*. He had a great aversion to all asceticism and lugubriousness. With no very robust bodily health, he was yet the reverse of everything morbid and sickly in spirit. Young in years, he was not less youthful and buoyant in tone of mind. With much real modesty, he was brave, manly, firm (sometimes, I confess, to a fault), fearless, in the character of his soul.'

In July 1861, Mr. Crichton married Marianne Fraser, daughter of Douglas Fraser, Esq., manufacturer, Arbroath. Two girls and a boy successively gladdened their home in the course of the succeeding years. The following letter written at the time when his first child was born makes happy allusion to the domestic sunshine which had fallen on him, and contains some important reflections on his ministerial work, after he had been more than eighteen months a city minister :—

'12 ARNISTON PLACE, EDINBURGH,
August 7th [1862].

'MY DEAR M'CRIE,—I duly received both your letters, one of them by the hands of your German friend. I delayed my answer to the first because my wife and I were daily expecting a certain event, and it was not easy to write under pressure of so great anxiety. Curiously enough, about an hour or so after said event occurred, in a beautiful quiet Monday evening, I went out to despatch to Arbroath the needful letters announcing the advent of our little one, and, just as I was posting them, I heard my own name, and found a foreigner, with spectacles on nose, and letter in hand, asking for me. He believed my statement that I was *myself*, and gave me your letter, the familiar handwriting on the back of which was pleasant to see. . . .

'The age of my little one, who is rather more than three weeks old now, reminds me of my further delay. Perhaps you may be wondering where everybody is, but I daresay my letter will reach you somehow. I enclose my photograph in return for yours, which is now adorning my album. I appear to myself in this likeness as being a meek-looking, milk-and-watery individual. There is a faint cry from the next room which sends my wife away like a shot even at the most interesting part of the book she is reading, and which reminds me of the dignity and responsibilities of fatherhood. This little one is only at that stage when she has "no language but a cry," and is the most helplessly dependent of all living things. I believe that I am so far sufficient for my duty in regard to her, that I am quite a proficient in the art of "keeping" the baby, that is, affording her exercise and entertainment by means of continual movements and meaningless sounds. Certainly, whether they make one better or nobler or no, a wife and child reveal capacities unknown before, and develop one's nature in new directions.

'I hope you are still holding on your way peacefully, faithfully. Perhaps it is a disease peculiar to the summer-time, but for the last few months I have constantly hungered and thirsted after some sphere of work like yours, and felt as though my own was wearing me down to feeble-

ness of mind and body. Amidst the inevitable crowds of faces, and the barren, endless streets, I weary after our green fields, and the sunshine through the windows of a country church, and the breeze which one never feels here wandering round it. By early upbringing, you are the town-mouse, and I the country one, and so I suppose you read everything the other way. I am to escape presently, and hope to come back so recruited, that the bustle will be congenial, and then I shall be upsides with you, and most contented with my lot. As it is, you are quite upside with me now, to my fancy, in an Arcadia, a paradise, or on a high pinnacle of blessedness, which I contemplate wearily from afar.

'I have got a sort of sunshine here which has not found its way to Barry Manse as yet—veritable sunshine. I can only wish you, when your turn comes, to be as happy as I am in this respect. Our church is shut for repairs, and I hope to move my caravan northwards on Saturday. Next Wednesday, I go to Lochee for a fortnight on home-mission work. After I am done with that, I hope to have a week or two of rest, when I may see you perhaps.

'It is an awful thing to preach. If I had thought of it as I do now, looked at it as I do now, I should never have been able to begin at all. Happily one comes to most things by degrees.

It is a very blessed thing to preach. I begin to be conscious of a peculiar joy in it I had not before, a greater nearness to God and to the people. But how far as yet from both! One would like to be a voice merely, the words to be all Christ's words, and the power the Spirit's power. "I know thy works, how . . . thou hast borne and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured and hast not fainted."

'Kindest regards from my wife and me.—Your most affectionate friend,

'ANDREW CRICHTON.'

A protracted and severe illness of Dr. Brown's, requiring his absence for many months from his congregation, threw upon Mr. Crichton almost exclusively the duties of the pulpit, and the whole ministerial superintendence of the congregation. Not only did he cheerfully undertake and diligently perform a task so different from what he had anticipated when ordained as junior pastor, but he even allowed the burden to be increased, in consequence of a painful event in the history of the Cowgate Territorial charge. That congregation was originally an offshoot from the New North, or rather, it was formed and fostered under its superintendence and care. Its first minister, the Rev. John Pirie, had shown himself a noble worker in Cowgate closes and 'lands,' and by his

extraordinary devotedness had drawn together a crowded congregation out of such raw material as the Cowgate and its closes supplied. In the year 1864, a severe and dangerous illness, the result, in all likelihood, of excessive labour, completely disabled Mr. Pirie, and obliged him to seek restoration to health in the south of England. The superintendence of his congregation was thus thrown on Mr. Crichton, who laboured to overtake both with the help of a probationer. In this way he was brought into close contact with the Cowgate congregation. It might have been thought that his studious character and refinement of mind would unfit him for the work of such a pulpit. But the result was entirely different. His tender human sympathy and deep earnestness enabled him to take a strong hold of the denizens of the Cowgate, and his services were highly prized. Mr. Pirie, on returning after a long illness, found the congregation as compact and prosperous as he had left it. Mr. Crichton's services were ever after remembered with the greatest pleasure; and when, on the morning after his death, Mr. Pirie, unexpectedly the survivor, announced the sad occurrence to his people, many of them were bathed in tears.

In the early part of the year 1864 there occurred a keen controversy in the Free Church, in connexion with the election of a professor to a

theological chair in Glasgow. It was the lot of the present writer to have a more conspicuous share than he at all wished in maintaining the claims of his loved and honoured friend, Dr. Islay Burns, to the vacant chair, both in Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly. All through the battle, no man was more zealous in Dr. Burns's behalf than Mr. Crichton, and no man was more delighted at the result.[1] But it was very painful to him, as it was to many others, to witness the display of sectarianism to which that conflict gave occasion. Some on the other side conscientiously preferred another candidate on quite fair and reasonable grounds; but others declared war against Dr. Burns because he was a man of catholic sympathies, and, though a Presbyterian, was willing to give to other systems credit for whatever features of excellence they were seen to possess. Such bigotry was not only most alien to Mr. Crichton's own feelings, but he trembled to think of the havoc it was fitted to make, if it should become predominant, or if it should even triumph on that one occasion,

[1] Mr. Crichton's speech in the Presbytery on behalf of Dr. Burns was not very successful. The fact is, his retired habits disqualified him for speaking on such occasions. He could not distinguish between what people were saying freely enough in private, and what it might be legitimate to say in public. By speaking out what was unsuitable, to say the least, for a public occasion, he ran himself into difficulty. And on some other occasions he got into trouble in the same way.

by alienating ingenuous and cultivated minds, lessening the number of devoted students for the ministry, and weakening the moral and spiritual power of the Church. How this disastrous evil might best be obviated in future was with him and others a frequent subject of earnest thought. Among the methods that occurred to him for advancing this object, one was the strengthening of the *Weekly Review* London newspaper, which was then under the able and genial editorship of Mr. Bayne. In conjunction with one or two friends, Mr. Crichton entered into communication with Mr. Bayne, and arrangements were made for bringing the *Review* into wider notice in Scotland, and for having a proportion of its articles from week to week contributed by Scottish writers. It was the privilege of the present writer to have many a pleasant meeting with Mr. Crichton and a few other congenial friends in connexion with this matter. The paper at the time was labouring under considerable difficulties, and among other things, the printing contract was held by a printer who, in setting up matter from manuscript, seemed to set at defiance the laws of grammar, spelling, and sense. It was a sad provocation to have one's English sentences turned into riddles which would have driven an Œdipus to distraction; but it was no small amusement, when we met, to have our riddles solved, and to be told the original

of the sentences which had been so ludicrously mangled or murdered. It may be safely affirmed that the contributions thus originated exemplified that spirit of Christian freedom and courtesy in the expression of opinion, apart from bitterness or ill-feeling, which the writers desired to recommend and extend. It may be added, that Mr. Crichton frequently contributed to the columns of another newspaper, the *Daily Review* of Edinburgh, in the form of reviews of books.

It must not be thought that Mr. Crichton's catholicity of spirit was in any way connected with unfaithfulness to his own church principles, or with indifference to the articles of the evangelical creed. In maintaining the doctrines of Revelation, Mr. Crichton was not only orthodox but earnest, as he was also most fervent and affectionate in pressing on his people the exercises and attainments of spiritual religion. But he had a great dislike to unsympathetic orthodoxy. He delighted to look, as he said when a student, on the sunny side of things, and to dwell, in the character of such a man, for example, as Mr. Robertson of Brighton, not on whatsoever things were morbid and contorted, but on whatsoever things were true, just, honest, pure, lovely, and of good report. He could not bear the spirit that fastened upon some exceptional features of the character, or objectionable views or theories, and

on the ground of these loaded a man, in many ways estimable, with unqualified denunciation. He often complained of the tendency of some of the leaders of religious opinion to ticket certain of his brethren as dangerous, and awaken against them a suspicion that damaged their reputation in the Church. It was a constant grief to him that men of exaggeration, so to speak, men in whom some one Christian faculty was disproportionately developed, were often so implicitly trusted and blindly followed, while men who were more spherical or complete, more just, fair, and charitable, got the cold shoulder, or were sent to Coventry. He had little confidence in the power of mere logic to sustain and propagate Divine truth, and by a strong instinct, felt that it must take hold of the whole human being, —emotions, imagination, instincts, everything,—if it was to achieve its noblest and widest triumphs. He felt that the truth must go forth, radiant with all the divine colouring which belongs of right to whatsoever is born of God, and be associated with an elevation and purity of spirit, on the part of those handling it, fitted to show that the balsam they commend to others has healed their own malady and sweetened their own breath. The bitter waters of Marah would never assuage the world's thirst, till sweetened by the tree of life. Roughness, coarseness, and above all, ill-temper

in the service of religion, were the objects of his disgust.

He liked the truth to be spoken in love, and felt that such difficulties as many were experiencing on great theological questions should be patiently examined and considerately discussed. In this spirit he set himself, in the winter of 1864-5, to address to young men, from his own pulpit, on Sunday evenings, a series of discourses on some of the theological questions of the day. The series embraced four lectures, the subjects of which were,—Scripture and Science; Inspiration; the Historical Christ; and the Bible and the Creeds. The attendance of young men at these lectures was very remarkable, as was also the interest felt in them. Encouraged by this result, he exerted himself the following winter to get a similar series delivered by older ministers and professors of the city. When he entered into communication with the proposed lecturers, he found them so entangled with engagements, that it seemed as if the proposal must be abandoned. But Mr. Crichton had too much perseverance for that. He kept at his plan, till he got half-a-dozen to consent to give lectures, the half-dozen, contrary to his wish, including himself. The course was, on the whole, most successful. Free St. George's Church was usually filled to overflowing with an audience consisting chiefly of young men. The lectures

were published in a volume entitled *Christianity and Recent Speculations.* Mr. Crichton's own lecture was not one of his happiest efforts, either in structure or in delivery. This circumstance gave him some concern, his modesty making him fear that he had assumed a position which he was not entitled to fill.

Besides contributing to the *Weekly Review* of London and the *Daily Review* of Edinburgh, Mr. Crichton maintained a pretty close literary connexion with the *Family Treasury,* and contributed some papers to the *Sunday Magazine.* A selection from these papers appears in the present volume. They were characterized by vigour of thought, beauty of style, and a tone of genial catholicity, and attracted no little notice in the circles where these journals circulated. In 1865, the editor of the *London Review,* the quarterly organ of the Wesleyans, being desirous of obtaining an article on religious parties in Scotland, applied to Mr. Crichton to write on that subject. He wrote a very interesting and able paper, and gave a genial and discriminating view of religious parties, as well as of the causes and the tendencies of the history of each.

In the beginning of 1866, Mr. Crichton received an invitation from the Free Church congregation of Chapelshade, Dundee, to become their minister. At first, his friends imagined that

there was no likelihood of his being willing to remove from Edinburgh to Dundee. But as the matter was discussed, it became apparent that he was desirous to go. His great reason seemed to be that as sole minister he would have more freedom to form and follow out his own plans of work and usefulness, and would thus be better able to influence the congregation for good. Not only had he no quarrel with the New North congregation, and nothing to complain of in his treatment by them, but the kindness he had received from them was extraordinary, and had made the deepest impression upon his heart. But he seemed to feel that alongside of a senior pastor, of such originality and force of character as Dr. Brown, and of elders who were accustomed, and with great reason, to regard him as their head, it might not be becoming, and it would not be easy for him to claim for himself that independence and freedom of action which a sole pastor might easily exercise. He had no fear of being thwarted in any plan he might set his heart on, but he shrunk from placing himself habitually in the position of leader and originator of such plans. To leave Edinburgh was a great trial. He had loved it from the first, and his love had grown with his years. His home feelings had fastened themselves to Edinburgh; on his deathbed, he said it was his home. He had

many friends to whom he was warmly attached, though probably he had no right idea of the depth of their affection. But he made up his mind that he ought to go to Dundee. No opposition was offered to his decision in public, although in private every means was taken, both by his colleague, the elders of the congregation, and his intimate friends, to induce him to remain. It was a cause of regret to several of Mr. Crichton's younger friends, that in the Presbytery the discussion on his translation terminated rather abruptly, without their having an opportunity to express their feelings. For myself, it happened that I was unable to be present; but next day I sent to a newspaper a few warm words, which, though some at the time thought to be exaggerated, were shown by next year's experience to be literally true.

His last sermon in the New North church was from the text, 'I am the bright and the morning star.' For five years, he said, the glory and love of Christ had been growing on him, and he would like his last sermon to be a little song of praise to Him. And a very beautiful song it was, of one who had indeed a pleasant voice, and could play well on his instrument. He sung of Christ the *bright* star, the crown and flower of the world, its best and brightest, its only noble, only good. And his song got richer, fuller, more thrilling as it

took up Christ the *morning* star,—the star of hope, star which prophesied of a coming day. First, he sung the dirge of the night,—the night of a lost soul, the night of a lost world. And with a sweetness and brightness intensified by the contrast with these dark strains, he hailed the day breaking in the horizon,—the rising of the bright and morning star:—

'And there is day, finally, for this sad world, and for our humanity, which has so sullied its robe and lost its crown. Christ is the Morning Star. The death of Christ is a great mystery; but His birth is even a greater. That He should live a human life at all, is stranger than that, so living, He should die a human death. I can scarcely get past His cradle in my wondering, to wonder at His Cross. The infant Jesus is in some views a greater marvel than Jesus with the purple robe and the crown of thorns.

'What a present, what a future, has been opened up for our humanity by the Incarnation of Christ! Not only does it now grovel, or feebly soar, here on earth; not only does it sing its eternal anthem and strike its harp, made perfect in the presence of God, in heaven; but, on the throne itself, in the very core of its brightness, wielding the sceptre of universal dominion, sits a Man—Immanuel. All naturalistic and pantheistic dreams of a deification of humanity fall far

short of this. Our thought staggers when we attempt to think of it; we put our hands before our eyes that we may not be blinded by an excess of light. Can you believe, when the throne of heaven has such a tenant, that the interests of this world, and its inhabitants, shall not be laid on the heart of God? Can you despair of yourself, lose heart in your battle with sin? Can you dread the future, if you have hope in Christ, make this world your home, or look on death as a going out and away from all beautiful and kindly things to mere chill and gloom? Can you lose hope, about the very worst of the human family, which has such a friend at court, about the troubling problems, the uncertain destiny of a world which gave the Redeemer His life, and was watered with His blood? Progress in knowledge and life is the very spirit of the religion, at the centre of which is the God-man—progress beyond the boldest of human dreams. Its motto is, "More and more unto the perfect day." To a time of the restitution of all things—to a new heavens and new earth; where the rose shall never hide in its heart the canker-worm, nor on the corn-fields shall come the blight and mildew, nor the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and the herd from the stall; where eyes shall never be dim with weeping, and there shall be rest for worn brain, and hardened hands, and wandering

feet; where coffins, and mourners, and graves among the snow or among the daisies, shall be no more needed, and sorrow and death shall be unknown; where purity is unsullied, and beauty is only beautiful, and the strong are tender, and the weak are patient; where the vision of God is immediate, and the enjoyment of God is unceasing, and beneath are the everlasting Arms, —to such a time, to such a world, points from heaven, this day, and every day, as with a finger of light—the Christ of God, the Bright and Morning Star.'

Mr. Crichton was inducted into the charge of Chapelshade Free Church, by the Free Presbytery of Dundee, on the 30th March 1866. He gives a quiet account of the proceedings in writing to his wife next day:—

'The whole proceedings were enthusiastic. It was quite extraordinary. I managed wonderfully, considering my lameness, to stand all the standing required of me. After dinner, Jamie went and got a lotion and some lint, and bandaged my knee, which was rather bad by that time, so that I didn't feel it much in the evening. I think my speeches rather told. I was awfully nervous in the morning, but got on pretty well. I am anxious now about to-morrow. I heard from Taylor of the petition to Dr. Blaikie. He

or Thomas Smith will call and give you some of the news.' [Rev. Robert Taylor of Free Greyfriars, Edinburgh, now of Camberwell, London, and Dr. Thomas Smith, of Cowgatehead, Edinburgh, had been present at his induction among his friends.] 'In the evening there was great enthusiasm, and the speakers all surpassed themselves. I never heard such able speaking at a soiree. Mr. Livingston made me cry as usual, and look rather foolish. At the close somebody proposed a vote of thanks to me, which the people applauded right on, as it seemed to me, for five minutes, so that surely I have not lost myself yet. I am sure to do it to-morrow, however.'

It was the general impression of Mr. Crichton's friends that in accepting the call to Chapelshade, he had made a blunder. There did not seem any suitability between his peculiar gifts and acquirements, and a congregation that had been moulded by successive ministers of a different type. But never were prognostications more entirely falsified. From the very first, Mr. Crichton felt at home with the congregation, and the congregation were charmed with him. In every sense of the word, his brief ministry in Dundee was a marvellous success. Crowds flocked to hear him, and hung upon his lips. He became the most popular preacher in the town. At the seat-

letting in May 1867, hundreds of applicants for sittings were disappointed, numbers of whom went away in tears. And his moral and spiritual influence was as remarkable as his popularity. His congregation lay before him like soft clay, ready to be moulded to his touch. A new sense of Divine realities seemed to come upon them as he preached. An upward direction was given to many a heart. Earth became little, Christ became glorious, and sin disgusting to their view. What so strikingly drew his people was his simple earnestness, his reality, directness, and affectionateness. Nothing was put on; it was all genuine. They saw that he was a true servant of Christ, and as to those things in him which were unlike what they had been accustomed to, they felt that they must be valuable, and they desired to be brought up to his level, not to bring him down to theirs. And here, probably, is the explanation of his being so much more appreciated in Dundee than in Edinburgh. The leading Free Church congregations of Edinburgh for the last generation have had ministers of a particular type, with gifts so remarkable, that the impression has been formed, unconsciously, perhaps, on their part, that all ministerial excellence must conform to that type. In Dundee, the minds of the people were less biassed in favour of a particular model. Another thing that

gave impressiveness to Mr. Crichton's Dundee ministry was his state of health during the brief and broken period over which it was spread. During his last illness he told his wife that he believed the cause of the impression he had produced in Dundee, as compared with Edinburgh, was that he had preached 'as dying to dying men.' He had a presentiment that the time was short, and his state of health gave a significance and power to his appeals, as he urged men to work while it was called to-day, and not to reckon on the morrow.

From his student days, Mr. Crichton had been liable to a feeling of weariness, which seems to have been brought on solely by the abundance of his labours. Hardly had he completed his ministry in the New North, when he was attacked by severe illness. Much of the interval between the two ministries that should have been devoted to recreation was spent in bed. By the day fixed for his induction into the Chapelshade charge, he was just able to be out. But he was extremely unwell. On the Saturday, when I went to Dundee to introduce him next day, I found him at the station, hardly able to walk. Besides other ailments, he complained of a severe pain in his side. So prostrated was he, that it was with the utmost difficulty he got through the service next day. At night he was worse. He was living

alone in a lodging, Mrs. Crichton, who was about to be confined in Edinburgh, not having been able to join him. On the Monday morning he said he had spent a most wretched night. But he was wonderfully cheerful and uncomplaining. He accompanied me in the forenoon to Edinburgh, and it was on the morning of that day that his little boy, David, was born. The pain in his side got worse and worse, and he was thoroughly prostrated by an attack of illness which prevented him from discharging the duties of the April communion, and kept him for a considerable time a prisoner in Edinburgh. After he began to recover, he oscillated for a time between Arbroath and Dundee, trying to preach occasionally, and returning to Arbroath to his father's house for rest and quiet. How ill he sometimes was may be gathered from the following extract from a letter to his wife :—

'ARBROATH, *May* 2, 1866.

'My Sabbath work did me no harm, unless perhaps it made me a little more susceptible to atmospheric influences. But the cold of Sabbath night and Monday has felled me again. I took a violent cold in my head, and shortly thereafter the pain in my side returned. On Monday I passed a wretched night; yesterday I came here. Happily, I met Jamie' [his brother] 'at the road

from the station. He came up here, felt me all, said there was no inflammation, and seemed at his wits' end. He gave me a bottle, however, of a sedative kind, which I have used profusely. I suffered much in the afternoon, but put on, in my despair, a mustard-poultice, and tortured myself into a temporary peace. That and Jamie's bottle kept me pretty quiet till one in the morning, when the pain broke out wildly; and after ineffectual attempts to bear it or get relief, I had to alarm the whole house. Papa and mamma and Dodo came down, and just fought with me till half-past three A.M., when they got me to perspire, and then to lie quiet.'

On his return to Dundee he was still suffering pain, and in all his work ever after he had more or less of a feeling of dragging. But he felt most sensitively for the congregation, all the more that they were most kind and considerate of him, and he resolved to do everything he could to prevent them from feeling that they had got saddled with an invalid and useless minister. Various country quarters were tried in the hope of their tending to the re-establishment of health. Bridge of Earn, Aberfeldy, Ballater, St. Andrews, Blairgowrie, were all resorted to, and for the most part with considerable temporary benefit. A letter to Mrs. Grove, written from Dundee in the beginning of 1867, in one of his working intervals, makes

grateful allusion to his recruited health, and yet expresses very clearly his expectation of the end :—

'DUNDEE, *February* 1867.

'MY DEAR MRS. GROVE,—I know you will be glad to hear that I have returned to my work with much comfort, which is no doubt increased by a measure of physical strength which enables me to get on from day to day. How thankful I should be for this, and that I labour among a most loving and attached people ; and all I desire is to spend and be spent for them. Time is short, and there is much to be done. May God grant that I may be the instrument, however feeble, of winning many souls to Christ !

'My thoughts often revert, dear Mrs. Grove, to the happy years I spent with these two fine fellows, Edward and Charlie,—a time when no cloud darkened our horizon, and all was sunshine and happiness. Since then, how changed is the scene to us all ! I have thought of your words when I saw you two years ago :—"My sun has now set." It is so ; but cheer up, my afflicted friend, look *upward*, to where your beloved husband *is*, and *onward*, to the glorious meeting where all partings are unknown, and above all, where sin can *never* enter. I am anxious, very anxious, for your prayers for a blessing on my work and dear people. I feel within me most

unmistakable signs that my ministry must be a short one. Oh for more life in the work, more zeal; for, after all, there is nothing worth living for but Christ.'

In March 1867 he was induced to make trial of the water-cure, and for that purpose he proceeded alone to Craiglands, Ilkley. He was most unfortunate in weather. The snow seems to have covered the ground all the time of his visit, chilling mind and body alike, and making it hardly possible for him, a somewhat lonely and quiet man, to attain aught of that hilarity of spirit which is so much both an effect and a cause of the water-cure. His daily letters to his wife have a somewhat pensive tone, and are marked by that wearying and longing for his much-loved home, which always characterized him, but now came on him in double force. It chanced that what we now copy were the last words he ever wrote to Mrs. Crichton, and this must be our apology for violating the secrecy in which he would always have had such letters kept:—

'I am going to-night to bid the Scotts goodbye. There is really nothing more to say except that I am wearying to see my wifie and the bairns again. You have never been long out of my thoughts, and are continually present to them now when the time of my home-going draws near, and the dream of you causes I could not say what thrills

of delight. To meet you and find you all well, so far at least, seems almost too good a thing to hope for and count on.'

Notwithstanding the unfavourable weather, he returned home from Ilkley considerably better. He seemed more able for his work than he had been since he came to Dundee. I spent a couple of nights with him at the communion about the middle of April, and was greatly pleased to find him in so good spirits, and so like his former self. But he still felt the pain in his side, and the improvement was extremely brief. Next month, after spending a week at Bridge of Earn, he proceeded to Edinburgh. He had been appointed a member of the General Assembly, but resigned the commission when he found his health still indifferent. He intended to preach for some of his friends, and on the first Sunday of the Assembly, he exchanged with Mr. Luke, and preached at Broxburn. This proved to be his last public service. Next day he came to Edinburgh, becoming the guest of Mr. Pitcairn in George Square, under whose roof nothing could have exceeded the kindness shown him. His look was that of one sunk and prostrate, and his feeling about himself was very despondent. I had never seen him so dull, so utterly destitute of buoyancy and cheerfulness, as I did when I called after he had seen Dr. Begbie. What vexed him was his

inability to give due service to his congregation, and the prospect of their being again left for an indefinite time like sheep without a shepherd, and burdened with a down-broken invalid.

On one of his sleepless nights at this stage of his illness he got a pencil and piece of paper, and scrolled the following lines—'a bit of a wail,' as he playfully called them, but not without their glint of sunshine :—

'Sadly the winds are moaning, wailing,
Calling over the sea,
Asketh my spirit, weak and failing,
Are they making their moan for me?

'The children are digging graves in the sand
Along the shore of the sea,
Little heed they or understand—
Are they digging a grave for me?

'Twixt heaven and earth an angel flieth,
Wide-winged over the sea,
And my trembling heart within me crieth—
Brings he a message for me?

'Homeward the laden ships are hasting,
Hasting over the sea,
Afar the sheen of their white sails casting—
Is there a haven for me?

'Heavily gathers the black storm-cloud,
Lowering over the sea,
And winds are shrieking in mast and shroud—
It is night, dark night with me.

'There is life after death, and peace out of pain,
Calm after storm on the sea,
Clear is the shining after the rain,
The morning breaks for me.

'EDINBURGH, *May* 1867.'

It was now found that a large abscess had been formed upon the liver, and an operation was determined on. The abscess was accordingly opened, and he stood the operation bravely. For a time he seemed to rally. But it soon became apparent that he was suffering also from other disease. The discharge from the abscess seemed to drain off the whole strength of his frame, and to reduce him day by day. To see what country air could do for him, he tried a week at Liberton, but he was no better for the change. Then he came to Grange, where he spent the last six days of his life. His strength continued to give way, and it became only too apparent that the end was drawing nigh.

But this part of the narrative must be given in the words of Mrs. Crichton, who has been able to gather together some recollections of the last few days :—

'We went to Liberton on Monday afternoon, the 1st of July, and he was pretty well for a few days, and even able one day to leave his room and walk across the lobby to another. He could read a little, and spoke quite cheerfully about himself, and expressed great gratitude to God for the measure of returned strength He had given. His own words to me were, "Oh, what a life of devotion you'll get from me if it is, as we now hope, God's intention to spare me." His

father came to see us on the Tuesday for a couple of hours, and it was then arranged that when we had remained at Liberton for two or three weeks, we should go as a family to Crieff—for the children were in Arbroath, and he wearied sadly to have them with ourselves. His father and mother were to be at Crieff, and we thought it would be nice to be beside them, especially as he had much enjoyed the air of Crieff three years ago. Gradually he seemed to get weaker and less able to leave his bed or chair, and I got very anxious to leave the farm-house and get lodgings in town. He also was most willing to go, for it was apparent that he was not improving. Day after day Dr. Zeigler waited for improvement to make the change, until we could wait no longer. On Sunday the 7th, the doctor told me that he would have carriages sent out after the afternoon service had begun; and Dr. Z. kindly returned, bringing some friends with him, and so we got him conveyed to lodgings at the Grange. He did not appear worse of the movement, for he was so ill before; but from that day my hope died. On the Sunday evening, Dr. Z. said to me that he thought I should get his father to be with me, who came and brought our Katie with him on the Monday.

'On the Monday morning, Dr. Begbie and Dr. Z. looked very grave; and I then thought it right to let my dear husband know their fears.

'Dr. Brown called on the Monday morning after the doctors had left, and I led him to the bedroom door, and he was left alone to pray with my husband; and it was then that he knew that he was soon to go home. After Dr. B. had left, I gently went in and sat down beside him, and he lifted his hand and placed it on mine, and was silent for a while. He then spoke to me with great composure about himself, and repeated the text, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." I read the 23d Psalm, and he repeated part of it himself. After getting some stimulant, he felt stronger, and exerted himself to speak, and try to say something to comfort me: "You must just think of me as being away in Australia for some necessary purpose. I leave you and our little ones to God and our friends. I wish I could have left you with brighter prospects, but some one will care for you. I have not been able to speak much to you, my darling, but I have thought much about you and our bairnies. We have been very happy during these years, and I did not think of having to part from you just yet,—part to meet again."

'In the afternoon of that same day (Monday), he asked me, "Have you Davy's portrait?" I gave it into his hand. He held it up, and said, "It is a sweet facie. I'm pleased you should have a

wee baby boy," and smiled most sweetly on the picture; and said, as if to himself, "I was very proud." He repeated the verse, "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children (and I gave mine what I thought was good), how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

'In the evening, I told him that Katie had come. He said, "I'm thankful she is here; I shall see her again." When she came in, he raised himself a little, and kissed her; and said in a strong clear voice, "My dear, dear Katie." I shall never forget the tone of his voice in speaking to her, nor the look in his dear eyes as she passed out of his room. He said to me, "The little children are a great boon to you, but you will feel great responsibility too." He began to grieve at leaving us differently from what he would have liked, but added, "I have committed you, my darling, and our little ones, in constant prayer to God, and He will provide. Try evermore to trust in Him."

'On Tuesday he tried to speak to me of how we would live after he was taken from us; but at that time it was too much for his strength, and he asked me to read from Revelation i., from the twelfth verse to the end. After a little, he said, "Oh, what will the lifted veil disclose?" I said, "The King in His beauty." Next day, after being

quiet for a time, as if in prayer, he said to me, "That was a sweet word, the sweetest I ever got, that you gave me yesterday." Not knowing to what he referred, I said, "What word?" and he answered, "When you said 'The King in His beauty.'" Seeing me distressed, he tried to comfort me, and said, "How kind God had been to us all the years past," adding, "You will come in due time, when His hand shall wipe away all tears, and our sorrow shall be turned into joy." On Friday, Katie was at a friend's house, and he had got very low in the afternoon, and said to me, "Bring Katie, that I may say good-bye to her, and then *I'll slip away.*" Being out of the house, it was some time before she could be brought. He longed much to see her, and I feared she should be too late. When she did come, he asked for some wine, that he might be able to speak to her. He spoke to her in his own way, as to a little child, saying, "Love God, dear Katie, and then mamma, and wee Maggie and Davy, because you are the oldest. Remember your little prayer, and the hymn you used to say to papa." He kissed her again, and then she walked away, his eyes following her till she was out of sight. Ever after that, he seemed to have no desire ungratified, but was calm and peaceful. After Katie had gone, he took my hand as if he thought of saying farewell, but only said, "You will be with her always."

'He asked me about this time to tell my sister, who had nursed him, how grateful he felt to her for all she had done for him, and especially for the composure she had shown, for he said she helped me to be calm. Frequently his father prayed, spoke, and read a little; but he was so weak that a few words sufficed. During one night, when wakeful, he questioned himself with great earnestness about the faithfulness of his ministry, and gave me a message of gratitude to his people in Dundee. On Saturday he wandered a little at times, but did not suffer pain. Early in the evening, I said, "You will soon be home now, Andrew;" and he looked up and tried to smile, so that I knew he heard me.

'On the Thursday, he said to me, "You will just lay me in the Grange Cemetery," and referred to our usual Saturday walk through it, and past the very spot where his body is resting.'

The remains of Mr. Crichton were laid, according to his wish, in the Grange Cemetery, not far from the grave of John Mackintosh, 'the Earnest Student,' whom in many ways he resembled, and those of Chalmers and Cunningham, and the many other patriarchal men who have turned that corner of burial-ground into a Cave of Machpelah. Seldom has the process of giving dust to dust, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, been performed

with more of the sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection. Seldom has any young man of thirty left behind him the record of a purer spirit or a nobler life. Amid our deepest condolences with his young widow and fatherless little ones, and his bereaved parents and other relatives, we cannot but thank God for the fragrance of the memory they are called to cherish, and the honour of the name they bear. To the flocks which he fed, he will continue to speak with a voice more tender and persuasive that it comes from an early tomb, and calls them to follow him as he followed Christ, treading close in his footsteps, through the path of suffering, onward to the crown of glory.

The funeral sermons in Chapelshade Church were preached by the Rev. Robert Taylor, then of the Free Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh, now of Camberwell, London, one of Mr. Crichton's most intimate and congenial friends. Mr. Taylor's closing words were as follows :—

'I shall not attempt here any estimate of his special gifts, farther than to say that there was in him a singular combination of quietness and power, of calmness and intensity, the result partly of temperament and partly of a mind nicely poised, with its great principles settled, and its powers knit up and well in hand for the great work of

life. Unusually well acquainted with our modern literature, he divined its spirit, detected the subtle sceptical influence of much of it, and read in it but the old cry in a new language of the deep dissatisfaction of the human soul while ignorant of Christ, and unreconciled to God;—Who will show us any good? And more than most of his brethren in the ministry was he qualified to deal with this spirit, and to respond to this cry. Of catholic sympathies, with a rich fancy, a fine poetic temperament, a gentle and loving nature, and a mind at once clear and graceful, baptized as he was with the love of Christ, and burning with desire to serve Him in the salvation of souls, he seemed to be a chosen vessel, sanctified and meet for the Master's use.

'And, as many among you will cordially testify, his brief ministry here, so earnest and so effective, carrying the ears of his hearers captive by the music of his exquisite style, and their hearts by the pathos and warmth with which he enlarged on the excellencies, and enforced the claims of the "King in his beauty;" and, so impressively followed up by his pure, gentle, earnest life, while full of rich promise, has not been without precious spiritual fruit. During the suffering months he spent among you, he literally sowed in tears. Shall we not hope that the good seed, even where unproductive hitherto, germinating in this

time of weeping, will spring up and grow while the sower sleeps, and that at the great day the Master and the servant shall hold harvest-home together, as he comes rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him?

'I cannot trust myself to speak of his closing days and nights of suffering, making the call to rest welcome to his weary spirit, and reconciling even those nearest and dearest to his going to be with Christ. Without excitement, without ecstasy, tranquil, if not triumphant, clinging, as he said, to the Crucified One, not in a chariot of fire, but, as more befitting his gentle, meditative spirit, in the arms of the Good Shepherd, this man greatly beloved left his friends and flock and home on earth, and entered on the joy of the Lord, and the fellowship of the redeemed in heaven. I believe that, not long before he died, he was greatly exercised, as he said, about the faithfulness of his ministry; saying that his great object had been to bring souls to Christ, but dwelling on the solemn light which a dying bed threw on the work of the ministry. He charged Mrs. Crichton, I may add, to convey to the Chapelshade congregation his heartfelt thanks for the kindness and forbearance extended to him during his brief and broken ministry.

'Sad and strange it seems to our view that such a choice vessel, so carefully fashioned, should

be broken and cast aside, just when ready to receive and bear the Master's name. But it is not broken; only purified and perfected in the fire, and taken to higher and holier service in the sanctuary above. And as it is, though he has only left the promise of what, had God spared him, he would have accomplished, enough remains to supply a welcome memorial of him to those who knew and loved him; perhaps also to give him a place in the saintly succession of Scottish ministers cut off in their early prime, who live long in loving memory, and continue to shed influence, as if from heaven, by their name and writings, partly because so early called away from earth. Had he lived and laboured a little longer here, I cannot doubt that in fine genius, in saintliness of spirit, rapidly mellowing in the early autumn of suffering that fell on him—and perhaps, also, in success in the ministry, of which I learn there were precious first-fruits—the name of Andrew Crichton would have been linked to that of Robert M'Cheyne in the religious annals of Dundee, as their spirits are now associated before the throne of that Saviour whom they both served so faithfully and loved so well.'

SERMONS.

SERMONS.

I.

CHRIST IS BORN.

'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.'—ISA. ix. 6.

I SHALL not enter into any argument to prove that in this verse are foretold the coming and kingdom of Messiah. Any other application of it—to Hezekiah or some earthly monarch and redeemer—is utterly futile. It stands out from Old Testament Scripture a high sky-cleaving peak, luminous with no other light than that which falls from heaven and from the throne of God and of the Lamb. There is, in that prophetic present, 'is born,' 'is given,' a reflection of God's unchanging *now*, which takes no note of the succession of the ages, but to which the things which shall be already are. This ancient voice of Isaiah is sweet and true to us. It is interesting to think how long ago it was when these words were spoken first. They are fresh and new as they were that day. Isaiah's rejoicing song shall con-

tinue to break from the heart of the Church even to the world's end: 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.' These words are like the glad shout of those who have watched for, and who welcome the sunrise. They are like the sound of the silver trumpet of the jubilee. Only one other cry can be so joyful, —one other piece of news so good, 'Christ is risen!' as this which proclaims, with so loud and sweet a voice, that Christ is born!

We shall take our way, step by step, through this verse, gathering up, one by one, its glowing delineations of the power and glory of Messiah. We have, *first*, the fact of His birth, 'unto us a child is born;' *second*, a hint of his parentage, 'unto us a son is given;' *third*, His kingly office and glory, for He is a royal child, 'the government shall be upon his shoulder;' and *fourth*, a fourfold name by which He is called, 'Wonderful Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.'

1. *We have the fact of His Birth.*—'Unto us a child is born.' The nativity of a human child, unless in circumstances of poverty or shame, is a cause of joy. Not the heart of the father and the mother alone leaps up at the coming of the little

babe. There are hidden founts of kindness which spring and play when they are most unlooked for at an infant's touch, or wail, or smile. Now, in that way, which is so human and so lowly, as well as so moving and tender to our humanity, it pleased the Lord of Glory to enter this world for its salvation. The significance of the whole eternity was summed up at one little point of time. God made, as it were, a new beginning. An infant's cradle held the hopes of humanity; yea, the grandest revelation that had ever been made of God's will, the grandest manifestation of God's glory. 'She brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.'

'Unto us a child is born.' We need have no doubt about our Lord's humanity. He hath come among us and made us his kinsfolk for ever. Not otherwise could He take our place and atone for us. The Lamb has been found for the burnt-offering; the Man to die for men. See! He hungers and He thirsts. See! He sleeps amidst the storm. See! He weeps at the grave of His friend. See! He dies, and the blood and water flow from His pierced side. And see! as the earnest of all this, —pledging Him to the work He did, planting his unaccustomed feet in the world's stormy ways, sending Him forth from the calm shore of His

eternal beatitude on these stormy waves of time,—He is made of a woman, made in the likeness of sinful flesh. He despiseth not the womb of the Virgin-mother. 'Unto us a child is born.'

2. *We have a hint of His parentage.*—'Unto us a son is given.' This peculiarity of expression, seeming at first to repeat the previous clause, and yet manifestly meaning something different, something more, can be explained only by supposing that some earlier Scripture was in the Prophet's mind, and that to it allusion is made by him. The second Psalm is certainly earlier than the time of Isaiah, and there we read, 'I will declare the decree: The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee.' Unto us a son is given; a son of sons—Jehovah's Son. And in 2 Samuel vii. we read also of a son of David, who was plainly greater than Solomon, and whose kingdom should abide for ever. Unto us a son is given. Thus, likewise, David's son. The parentage of our Lord is thus taught us here: we look on its divine and on its human side. He came of Abraham's and David's seed, and all the heritage of blessing and promise which had come down in that line from age to age descended and rested upon Him. But of One higher far than David was He to say, 'My Father,' and from the highest height of heaven, from the throne of God, was to come this voice, 'This is my beloved Son!'

Behold, then, the divine and human met in Christ! Behold the King Immanuel; the woman's seed, and yet withal the Eternal One. Humanity claims Him as its own; all earthly beauty, and purity, and strength, and tenderness finds in Him its ideal, its faultless exemplar, and around Him circle the angelic choruses, and before Him the thrones and the kingdoms bow, and to Him the suns and the stars, the worlds and the boundless abysses, bring their brightness or their darkness, their sound and silence, proclaiming His name, or yielding Him at least a page on which to inscribe it in characters of life and light. He is the heir of earth and the heir of heaven; the desire of all nations and the great I AM. And yet it is for us His glory has its chiefest lustre; in our case and necessity is the reason of His glorious person to be found; the salvation of lost souls is the achievement, the hope of which He cherished in the past eternity, and the laurels of which He is to wear in the eternity to come. 'Unto us a son is given.'

3. *His kingly office and glory, for He is a royal child.*—'The government shall be upon His shoulder.' A royal child indeed! The heir, the crown-prince of the greatest empire in the world is born to a far poorer heritage than the child of Mary, the Babe of Bethlehem. Acclaiming peoples, illuminated cities welcome the birth of

the one; the birth of the other was heralded by angelic songs, and all heaven was filled with its wonder and its glory. God's heir is a Biblical expression, and so we may use it. This Jesus of Nazareth is the eternally begotten Son of God and the load of universal government is upon His shoulder.

But He is destined to a grander kingdom even than this,—grand with moral more than material grandeur,—a mediatorial kingdom, a government which is hallowed with blood of redemption, which is ushered in with shouts of victory. When He stood at the bar of the Roman governor, its peculiar meaning and glory were becoming apparent. 'Pilate said unto Him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king.' And when He had died and risen again, and was now on the wing for heaven, and the eleven disciples had assembled to meet Him in the mountain which He had appointed, 'Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.' Angels and archangels bow to this wondrous child; earth lays all its treasure, heaven all its stars and splendours at His feet. Round Him as centre, yea, as pervading life, the system of nature from its lowest depth to its highest height revolves. Our own life is full of Him. He is its author, its upholder, ever-gracious, ever-near. The world

is full of Him. He pervades its history, He animates all its activities, He rules in the turmoil of its strifes. And all, mark this, for it is the main thought of the promise before us, that He may indeed sit on the throne of David, for His Church's and His people's good. For you, dear believer, He wears His royal robe and crown, subduing you under His sway, subduing, too, the enemies that assail you, and bearing all things towards a blessed result for you of everlasting life and peace. Ah, there is good news for the sinner hidden in this royal word! This government has come to be on His shoulder in connexion with certain other things which also He bore there. On that shoulder a burden lay once, heavier than the burden of universal government, the burden of sin imputed to Him, the burden of death which He must die. And on that shoulder has lain many another burden to be borne by Him with joy. The shepherd has found his lamb, and his step is quick and his eye is bright while he bears it home! O King! Shepherd! Child that hast been given! The shoulder that bears the government shall surely bear me, my little, sad, feeble life, over the world's moor and mountain and pathless wilderness to the kingdom and the fold of heaven. 'The government shall be upon his shoulder.'

His Fourfold Name.—'His name shall be called

Wonderful Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.' His fourfold name, I say; for in the Hebrew the name beginning with Wonderful and the end of the verse consists of only eight words, coupled two and two. The first couple, then, or first fold of the fourfold name, is Wonderful Counsellor; the second, Mighty God or God-Hero; the third, Everlasting Father, or Father of Eternity; the fourth, Prince of Peace.

First, *Wonderful Counsellor.*—These two go together to make up one appellation. They are not exactly connected together as the rest are; that is, it is not in His counselling only, though in His counselling mainly here that He is wonderful. Elsewhere the Lord Jehovah is spoken of as wonderful in counsel. 'Why askest thou thus after my name,' said the Angel of the Lord to Manoah, 'seeing it is secret?' (wonderful the name was). And in Rev. xix. 12, it is said, 'His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew but He himself.' For the full and precious meaning of His counselling, let me recall to your memory how he spake of the Holy Ghost as another Comforter—so speaking of Himself as the first and true comforter, advocate, adviser, and helper of His people.

He counsels, and his counselling is wonderful,

and He is wonderful in all He does. Wisdom and love are the great characteristics of His counsels. They are true, and they are kind. Think of the great scheme of redemption, and say if He is not wonderful in counsel. Think of the obedience unto death, the perfect righteousness of the Surety, the entire satisfaction He rendered to the justice of God. Think of all the way by which He hath led His Israel in the centuries past, all the way by which He hath led you these bygone years, that He might bring you to His kingdom. Oh! He is wonderful; in His nature wonderful; in His Divine and human person wonderful; in His work and suffering wonderful; in His grace wonderful;—wonderful above all the wonder of His deity in the plan of redemption, and in its complete fulfilment in gathering to Him all His chosen ones from the greatest to the least.

Second, *The Mighty God.*—This is not an adjective and a noun, but two nouns, the first of which is God, and the second Hero, or Mighty One. Here beyond all question a name which elsewhere in Scripture is the incommunicable possession of Jehovah is applied to the child born and the son given. For we read (Deut. x. 17), 'Jehovah your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a *mighty*, and a terrible;' and (Isaiah x. 21), 'The remnant shall return,

even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.' Again (Psalm xxiv. 8), 'The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.' The seeming humanness of this name Hero, or Mighty One, so strangely joined to the name of God, is explained when we look at Christ, at the Son of Man whom God hath made strong for Himself. A warrior, ever contending with human weapons,—faith and the word of God,—foiling Satan with a promise; living and dying in faith; conquering on the battle-fields of earth, and amidst the conditions of humanity, and yet God Almighty bating not one jot of His deity for all His humanness, pouring into the channels of His grace and sympathy a power omnipotent, divine,—'The mighty God.'

Thirdly, *The Everlasting Father, or Father of the Eternal Age.*—Some interpreters have adduced to explain this expression an Oriental usage of speech, which makes Father mean the possessor of such and such a thing, or one who is especially endued with it. 'Father of goodness,' like 'Son of Peace' in the gospel, would mean one specially characterized by goodness or by peace. In that case there would be no fatherhood here at all, but the words would simply mean 'Eternal One.' I hold with the English version. There is everlastingness here, but there is Fatherhood too. The prophet is thinking in all this of the weal

of God's Israel, and so He pronounces Him anew to be the dwelling-place of His people in all generations; yea, in the generations that lie beyond the utmost bounds of time, the generations, the unending ages of eternity. This child, this son, is a Father for ever, a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows in His holy habitation. That father cared for His child, and He cares for His church. He is the good shepherd, and the good father too, *giving* His life, and then *living* His life for His children's sake. The Father everlasting is the changeless Saviour, —is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day and for ever. No change comes over His being, nor over His care and love. Time writes no wrinkle there. His locks are bushy and black as a raven. The ages fade out and pass away, but He abideth for ever. He fed Jacob, and led him by Bethel and Padan-aram and Egypt to the continuing city. John found Him the same, though that death on Calvary had come between, in the visions of the desert isle. The saint of God that died yesterday, or shall die to-morrow, in the old familiar words committed his spirit into His hands. The last of the redeemed snatched from a world in flame shall be washed in the atoning blood of the Cross, and shall depart to be with Jesus. And in that higher state of being, where time and space are lost, He is the

sun that shall no more go down, the moon that shall never withdraw itself, the King whose reign has no ending as it has no bound,—the everlasting Father.

Fourthly, *The Prince of Peace.*—The true King Solomon, of whom that king, at the zenith of the Hebrew monarchy, was but a type, and to whom in the Song of Songs, which is Solomon's, he transfers his name and many of his characteristic glories. The Jewish kingdom under this most glorious of its kings, and Jerusalem, with peace within its walls, and prosperity within its palaces, —what a faint picture of the kingdom and capital city of this Prince of Peace! He derives his title, you see, not from any principality, the very wealthiest on earth or in heaven, but from that which is indeed the sun of His kingdom, the element in which it subsists, its pervading atmosphere; and that is peace.

But do not think, dear friends, that there is any confusion or contradiction here, when the greatest of warriors, the God-Hero, is called Prince of Peace. War and peace are not mere contradictories, so that the man of peace can never be the warrior, nor the warrior the man of peace. It is a one-sided and somewhat maudlin sentiment which holds them to be so. True peace may come out of bitter war, and war may be made inevitable by false peace. Oh!

through what a storm of trial and heat of conflict has this princedom of peace been established! It implies atoning death; it implies victory over the powers of darkness. Thorn-crowned, but with the thorns gleaming as it were with gems and gold; with the print of the nails in His hands, and the mark of the spear in His side, and with His foot on the necks of conquered enemies, death stingless, Satan fallen as lightning from heaven, the Lord Christ proclaims His reign of peace.

Dear friends, I have brought you glad tidings. Christ is born; nay, Christ has died. He is the very Saviour for you, for me. Have I not shown you the ladder on which you may climb from earth to heaven, reaching from the manger of Bethlehem upwards by the Cross to the Throne? Have I not set before you one who on every side meets your case, and invites your trust? Man, yet God, so wondrous wise, so strong, so eternal, so rich in peace: 'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.'

II.

THE ALONENESS OF GOD'S SALVATION.

'It is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'—1 Cor. II. 9.

Unseen, unheard of, undreamt in the wildest, boldest dream; a conception transcending all others; a mystery the deepest, sweetest, holiest; a work for ever unparalleled, is God's salvation. So says the text. That, I think, is its meaning. The eye sees much that is beautiful and wonderful; the colouring of earth, sky, and sea; the lavish wealth of lovely form as well as lovely hue which strews the face of the world; sees almost without looking, and when it does look through telescope or microscope, can cast its glances deep into the little, far into the vast. But it sees nowhere aught like this. The ear hears much that is grand or tender,—the reverberating thunders, the dulcet harmonies; from the past, too, more than from the present, are borne in upon it the histories of things which

were great and strange, causing it to eat the bread of tears, causing it to drink the wine of astonishment. But it hears no tale like this. The heart of man has responded always to the things which God has placed around him; has so far read their meaning, translated them into articulate speech; and the heart of man has reasoned from the seen to the unseen, has built Babel-towers of speculative thought, has dreamed great dreams; yea, in its ecstasy, has come near to gazing on the glories which are hid with God in heaven. But it has built no tower, dreamed no dream, of itself come to no insight and vision like this: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'

The formula, 'It is written,' indicates a quotation, and a quotation the source of which is to be found in earlier Scripture. I see no difficulty in finding the original of the words before us in Isaiah lxiv. 4: 'Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.' The same thought is found in both, chiselled more finely in the hands of the apostle; the transcendence, aloneness, antecedent inconceivableness of God's salvation. There was no

record in eternal archives of such a thing; there was no basis of natural data on which to reason to it; there were no hues so bright or forms so lovely in human memory that they could be woven into a dim dream even of its glory: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'

We are taught here,—1. That God's salvation is a thing by itself alone.

2. That the knowledge of it is due to Revelation only.

3. That, even with Revelation, it is a riddle to the natural heart of man.

1. *The Aloneness of God's Salvation.*—Were it not that it does so meet our case, that it evidences itself as a medicine does by healing, the Gospel-story would be almost too marvellous to be believable, too good to be true. Perhaps with often telling it has lost for us some of its wonderfulness. Ah! that must be if we have read it only as a story or pleasant tale; if we have let the well bubble up at our feet without bowing down to drink it thirstily. But if we so do, if we stop and drink, if we enter into the fellowship of the mystery, every thought we have about it, every day we live in the shadow of it, makes it more grand and tender, more wonderful in every way.

Jesus and His love, the cross of Christ, the grace from on high, the place prepared, the glory, honour, and immortality,—dear Christian, I appeal to you, do not these gain for you every day a more unapproachable majesty, a more melting tenderness? Why, it is like to become oppressive sometimes. Like the sense of glory Moses had at the bush, or John in Patmos, in presence of his risen Lord, crushing one to the earth, wringing out Peter's cry, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.'

I propose to bring before you the aloneness, the transcendent wonderfulness of God's salvation as it is seen in some of the more prominent elements of the gospel mystery.

Think, *first*, of the Person of Christ. In the forefront, in the centre of all, the focus of every ray is He. One marvellous figure, whose like never has been, never could be,—the Lord Jesus, —and, oh! what a sight is here! You miss no tender lineament of your own humanity in this Son of Man. He despised not the Virgin's womb; he was cradled in a manger; he shared a poor man's lot, for they said, 'Is not this the carpenter's son?' The sun and the stars swept over Him, marking the onward-going of a life which, from its tender bud at Bethlehem and Nazareth, opened out into a wondrous passion-flower, into blossom and fruit of singular fulness,

and yet grew more human instead of less, as it passed deeper and deeper into the darkness. Well, but what is this? A wonder-working power which is more than that of a prophet sent by God,—the original fountain of life itself unsealed and flowing there,—and then a solemn voice interpreting the power, and accounting for it, saying, without enthusiasm, without fear of contradiction, with quietest assurance, 'I and my Father are one.'

There have been vague longings in human breasts for nearer union and communion of the finite and the infinite, of man and God; and yet the longing, if it reasoned at all, had ever to fall back on itself as utterly vain,—this gulf is the most impassable of all to human thought; to it the union is not, cannot be. But, lo! not in any general conception, but in a living person, visible, audible, loveable, the hero of a well-known story, —God and man are one. This is Immanuel. This is God dwelling with men on the earth. This is the infinite and the eternal passed into the channels of the finite and the temporal. What could not be has been. All our ideas are revolutionized. On the even course of human things has broken in an unexpected, transcendent, all-transforming glory. Most true it is, that 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'

Think, *secondly*, of the Atonement, the Cross of Christ. Great purposes would have been served, great discoveries made of God and the things of God, even if beside the Person we had not to set the work of Christ, beside Incarnation, Atonement; even if the story of Jesus of Nazareth had not hidden in it the deeper mystery of the guiltless guilt-bearing, the sinless made sin, God redeeming man by sacrifice and suffering unto death. Dear friends, the Cross which was so sharp to Christ, is sweet, how sweet to us. We recognise in it with undoubting faith the pouring out of the vials, the burning out of the wrath-fire, the end of the Lord's curse and condemnation to every one that believeth. Gladly do we put on the shining robe; but remember we know not in any adequate sense the secret of its wearing. Listen to the Saviour's cry at the close of the three hours' darkness, and see if you can cast a gleam on the infinite gulf of His distress, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' God and death meeting in the experience of one Person; the blood of God purchasing His flock; the Eternal Father forsaking the Son, who is nevertheless in His bosom for ever; and the fruit of all, pardon without the clearing of the guilty; the strangest wedding and embracement, without concession on either side, of Mercy and Truth, of Righteousness and Peace. Oh! this could not be

but once, nor could any ladder of created wisdom ever lead up to this, or anything like this : 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'

Think, *thirdly*, of the Holy Spirit's work. Not even in the fullest discovery of the Person and Cross of Christ would the problem of humanity, ruined and restored, be found to be solved. All this grandeur of redemption in possibility and in actual accomplishment is of course external to the spirit of man, and only by removing hindrances, though that is much, opens the way to this union with God. Yes, and if you like, by providing helps, bridging the gulf over, and awakening into life voices which call, saying, 'All things ready! Come, come! Look unto me! Ho, every one! Whosoever will.' But the soul to whom these calls are addressed is virtually lying on the gulf's hellward side stone-dead, deaf to the pleasant voices, and blind to all the glory. But, see! the doctrine of the Three-One Jehovah gets a new unfolding. From heaven descends, and over the dead soul broods the Holy Ghost, and there is life in glazed eye, and stiffened limb, and pulseless heart. The disastrous impotence of the human soul, the bias it had away from God and good, the adamantine hardness of it, the death in itself worse after all than any death which from with-

out might fall upon it,—even for this wrong is a remedy, for this disease such a Physician. Oh, clasp to your heart the promise of the Holy Spirit's grace! It is *the* key to Christ, and life, and heaven, to the whole cabinet of God's treasures of mercy. Were it lost, shut the Bible, stop that preaching, there is no hope for you or me. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. But the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. For out from heaven stretches down that arm so tender and so strong. Do you feel it grasp you? Do you feel it lift you up and strengthen you? O Holy Spirit, gracious, mighty, wonderful, fold Thy shining wings and rest with me, and leave me never! There is none like Thee; true and only Life-giver, there is none but Thee. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'

Think, *fourthly*, of heaven and the Father's house. A superficial reading of the text would refer it wholly and simply to the future blessedness of God's people. Though not wholly and simply, it does refer to this; it is most true when understood of this. We speak much of heaven. We have a whole vocabulary, partly gotten from the Bible, for its unseen realities. Human sentiment makes its guess about, flings its glances towards, paints its pictures of the things within

the veil. And a gracious soul, steeped in Scripture, has the kind of feeling that it knows heaven almost as well as earth; that in the Father's house it would not wake up from its death-dream with the feeling of a stranger. What a magnificent materialism is that of the city with streets of gold, and gates of pearl; the river, the trees, the sky without sun or moon, and without cloud or night! And it serves our uses well. But what does it amount to? Almost nothing. Do not think I speak too strongly when I say that it is like a curtain painted with some pleasant landscape which hangs before, and hides, and gives no hint of the scene you wait to see. And so, when we wish to be really satisfied, we fall back for our thought of heaven on these words of Jesus, vague and dim as to all things but the main thing, the fact of His presence there,—'That where I am, there ye may be also.' Dream on your dream of heaven, dear friend. It will help your faith, but it will not be like the reality. That you could not know now; and if you did, you could not tell it; these are things (as Paul, who did know a little, says), which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Here language fails, and imagery is useless, and thought folds its spent wing, and falls earthwards helplessly. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'

2. *That the Knowledge of God's Salvation is due to Revelation only.*—Matters of faith, and not of reason, these,—'the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom.' Not from the earth, but from the heaven must break forth the voices which tell this story of redeeming love. That is certain; and the apostle makes an almost startling use of it here, to excuse in some degree the Lord's crucifiers. There He was, but they did not, could not know Him; no voice within themselves would whisper who this was. There was blind, instinctive hatred of Him; there was stubborn deafness to all His self-declarations; but no clear view had ever come to them of His real dignity: so simple and meek and humanlike, He was sublimely incomprehensible; and so, swept by their frenzy, they imbrued their hands in the blood of the Redeemer of the world, 'not knowing,' as He himself said very pitifully, 'what they did.' Ver. 8: 'Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.'

Brave, true-hearted, human thinkers in heathen days, for instance, with only the light of nature to guide them, have come wondrously near the truth on many matters of the highest moment. And there is a revelation, a kind of Gospel, I might almost say, open to the human soul, made in God's image, to undervalue which is the merest

folly. Something in us tells, apart from Revelation, what we are, and whence we come,—

> 'Though inland far we be,
> Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
> Which brought us hither:
> Can in a moment travel thither,
> And see the children sport upon the shore,
> And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.'

Light of nature! after all it is but a kind of starlight, in which you can discern certain well-marked paths, and distinguish houses, walls, and trees after a fashion, but always with a sense of something vast and vague and formless, and always with a danger of 'losing yourself,' to use an expression which has more in it than one thinks, getting soul and sense so absorbed into the scenes round you, that a moment comes when you cease to have any power over it, and can find your way through it no more. But the light of Revelation is the open-eyed, self-conscious, articulate, world-revealing light of day. And that light, blessed be God, has so saturated the thoughts and life of men, that it is difficult now to discover what mere light of nature would be. Those who profess now-a-days to teach a natural religion are great thieves,—thieves from the Bible, from the supernatural which shines here,—with this excuse for them, that their theft is unconscious, has become in fact inevitable. Let us walk in the broader light flashed straight from

God's throne; let us drink of the deeper well which springs in the smitten Rock. 'God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.'

3. *That even with Revelation Salvation is a riddle to the natural heart.*—A world of blind men would be little better of the fairest sunlight. The soul has a night of its own which turns for it every day into night. And so there are very solemn and personal things to be said about the relation of these things which God hath prepared to the spirit of man. The natural man receives them not; they are foolishness to him (ver. 14). God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit (ver. 10). Revelation, you know, is not complete till it has passed first into the mind of those to whom it is made. Your food benefits you nothing till you eat it; nor your money till you use it; nor the fair scene till you verily see it; nor the sweet music till it verily thrills you through and through. And this sight of grace and mercy and peace is not to be seen by merely *human* eye, nor the sound of it to be heard by merely *human* ear, nor the deep experimental sense of it to be received by merely *human* heart. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.'

It is under the Spirit's agency, it is after the new birth, it is within the kingdom, that the

things prepared are prepared indeed for you. And so my theme has a very personal edge to it, makes a sharp distinction between man and man. Am I, are you, thus spiritually enlightened? Have we gotten the key to the treasure-house? Have we ever really heard the mystic harmonies? Oh! *there* is one seeing, and another not; *there* is one hearing, and another not—the difference between which is the difference between life and death. I tremble when I think of this. I hang my head in shame and fear when driven into a corner, and plied with the question this way. There are the two alternatives,—yea or nay. I tremble, but then I look not *down* but *up*. *Down*,—the play of my own heart gives me no comfort; but *up*, ah! that is the Saviour I see, that is the Cross; and I know that He is my Saviour, and I know that He died for me. One who looks open-eyed will not mistake the light of a candle for the light of the sun. Seeing is its own evidence. Said the healed blind man, bathing his lifelong darkened eyes in a light he never saw before, and could not recognise as known of old, with sublime disregard of all evidence, sublime self-certainty—there was the earth, and there the heaven—'One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.'

All this would be presumptuous, would be mere delusion, but for the positive side of the

truth that God's salvation is unintelligible to the natural heart. To the heart Spirit-quickened its mysteries are plain; its facts at least are known, and mighty. You have wondered at the knowledge of the Redeemer shown by a little child. It seemed beyond your own; the Holy Ghost was there. In heathen countries to which we sent our science and the gospel,—the gospel, the wisdom of God in mystery, exotic on earth, has taken root the soonest in many a soul at least. It was the Spirit of God that did it. And so, when you and I, my friend, are full of fears and shame of ignorance, and bitter sense of halting unbelief; when the things of God seem great matters and things too high for us; when the glory grows so bright, that our eyes, straining into it as into an intense light, instead of seeing, run out with painful disappointed helpless tears, then let us think of and cry for the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, concerning whom that most sweeping promise in all the Bible is made: 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.'

Dear friends, there is no middle way. Know Christ and His salvation, and live; or know them not, and be lost for ever. God was guilty of no caprice when He formed a counsel so strange. The Lord Jesus was no way Quixotic

when He came so far, and died so sad a death. There was no way but this, no hope but this. Well, what have we here? I leave you these things to think of. A dire necessity of yours, —a case hopeless, so far as any ordinary cure is concerned, but a God in earnest—oh! what deep bitter earnest to save you, and a salvation transcending all human dreams, just as sure and just as free as it is transcendent and alone. Surely there is one word of Scripture which my whole sermon, if you have taken it home at all, must have been causing to sound in your ears: 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?'

III.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

'But now the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.'—ROM. iii. 21.

THERE is a theme which is never hackneyed, a certain story of which it is impossible to tire. Those who tire of it have never heard it aright, have heard only something which they mistook for it, and which, perhaps, is quite as tiresome as they say. This theme, this story never grows old, like old tales of departed generations which we read with little interest, they are so far off and unreal. It has the same power and life to-day that it has always had, because the evil which it points out and cures is always there, and because the help and comfort which it brings are always needed. This theme is the righteousness of God without the works of the law; this story is the story of redeeming love. Sin and death, alas! are always young; they do not grow old, far-off, faded traditions of a vanished past. And so, blessed be God, the gospel of Christ is always

new, and fresh, and strong; it has an immortal youth; it is the everlasting gospel.

My friends, there is nothing in time or eternity, in all the universe, which you and I are more concerned to hear about than this thing of which the Apostle Paul here speaks. It is the sick man's physician and medicine; it is the drowning man's plank; it is the fugitive's city of refuge; it is the exile's, the prodigal's welcome home. It would be black despair not to have heard it, it will be blacker despair to have heard it carelessly and in vain. But the word of life is here. The gospel-hope is here. Has the text a formal barren sound, do you think, business-like and matter-of-fact, so to speak, without poetry, or sentiment, or tenderness of any kind? That is because the thing it speaks of is a thing done, and done thoroughly, fixed and settled, confirmed for ever. There is a perfect universe of love and tenderness behind. I thank God that the ground of my salvation is set before me, so naked, distinct, satisfactory: 'Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.'

We are taught here,—I. That there is a righteousness which is the ground of our salvation.

II. That it is sufficient: 'the righteousness of God.'

III. That it is not legal: 'without the works of the law.'

IV. That it is the hope of all God's children: 'being witnessed by the law and the prophets.'

I. That there is a righteousness which is the ground of our salvation.

One often speaks of coming to Jesus, and believing in Jesus, and being saved through Jesus, in a vague and elliptical way, which is all very well if you understand what is implied in such modes of speech. But it is plain enough that one who has not been taught aright God's method of justification must be a good deal bewildered by being summoned or besought to come to Jesus and believe, and so on. He would like to do this, if he only knew what it meant, if he only knew where Jesus is to be found, and what he has to give, and in what way he may, by coming to Him, attain to peace with God. But he hears only more or less earnest voices crying, Come to Jesus! come to Jesus! Only believe! only believe! and he cannot make it out at all. If his convictions of sin be rather shallow and imperfect, he will content himself with fine talk about the love of Jesus, and what a friend of sinners Jesus is, and how willing and how faithful, and with a certain glow of pleasurable emotion which such talk cannot fail to produce. But

if his sins have come and looked him in the face, and he have comprehended even a little the position in which they put him with God, I can assure you your fine talk about the love of Jesus will not satisfy him, and he will soon put you in a corner with his question, But how? but how? but how? It is here that a great deal of the fine sentimental theology of the day makes shipwreck. The best safeguard from its wiles, the best exposure of its emptiness, is, a true, deep sense of sin.

For if I feel that I am a lost sinner, that at God's tribunal I am brought in guilty (and it is of no use to say that God has not a tribunal, that there is no such thing in the Bible, that He is not a Judge but a Father; for that tribunal is set up in the soul and life of every one of us, and we have been arraigned before it, and have heard in the silence of our spirit its awful awards; and we may as well doubt our own being as doubt the existence of a moral law, by which we must be acquitted or condemned)—if, I say, I feel that I am a lost sinner, that at God's tribunal I am brought in guilty, you cannot satisfy me with anything short of a *righteousness* which I may take with me, just as certainly as if I took a roll of parchment which I could carry in my hand or in my bosom, in which I could solace myself by reading my title to the inheritance, which I could pull out and display whenever the accusing voice

of my sins was heard, and at the sight of which, when I appeared before the throne, the Judge would say to me, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' I wish to be as sure that my sins are taken away, as though I saw them all written down, and then scored through and through and through, so as to be illegible for ever. I wish to be as sure that my debt to God is forgiven, as I am that my debt to man is forgiven, when my creditor gives me a receipt or discharge, signed with his name, declaring that the money I owed him has been paid to the uttermost farthing.

Do you think this very hard, and distinct, and business-like? Ah! friend, your soul will not be washed from its stains with libations of rose-water. It is a desperately real business this. That sin must be got out of the way, and it will stay there, and defy all your fine sentiments. You may pit a shadow against a shadow, but a stout oak-tree needs a strong axe to hew it; a rock that has stood for ages needs a good charge of gunpowder to blow it into the air. Do you think that your debt to God is a sham, while your debt to man is a reality? Do you think that what is mere honour and right between man and man, ceases to be honour and right between man and God? Do you expect God to take tamely at your hand, what you would deem, and your fellow-men would deem, to be an insult and a wrong?

Certainly God is very different from man, is merciful as man could never be. He does not require *you* to pay the debt. If He did, the suffering of an eternal hell would be the only payment you could make. But He requires that it shall be paid. How can He do otherwise? And the only payment for it, the only thing which will pass at His tribunal, is, a righteousness.

Where is it, then? Not in me, Lord, not in me. Things have gone with me far past the possibility of that, long ago. I hear my doom; I hear it in this hour. I need not wait for that—"Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Yes, but here the text comes in and tells us that there is a righteousness,—a righteousness which, for the best of reasons, God will not fail to approve and accept,—a righteousness which is available for us. It is the surety-righteousness of Jesus. It is the sum, as it were, of His obedience and His suffering, faultless and of infinite value, set to the sinner's account. Travellers on the continent of Europe need, or at least used to need, a passport. If they were found without it, were not able to produce it before the officers of justice, detention on their journey, imprisonment perhaps, would follow. But whoso could draw it from his pocket and unfold it, and show its red seal and the signature of the Foreign Minister of Great Britain, was as free and unassailable as any citizen of the

land. This righteousness is as distinct, unmistakable, effectual as that. At sight of it the prince of darkness retires in despair. At sight of it the angel-guards throw wide the gate of heaven. At sight of it, its common seal, its signature by the finger of God, the King smiles and says, 'Come, ye blessed.'

It is written in the Pilgrim's Progress, that when Christian and Hopeful came up to the gate of the city, 'they gave in each man his certificate which they had received in the beginning; those, therefore, were carried in to the King, who, when He had read them, said, "Where are those men?" To whom it was answered, "They are standing without the gate." Then the King commanded to open the gate, "That the righteous nation," said he, "that keepeth truth may enter in." But when Ignorance came, "he was asked by the men that looked over the top of the gate, "Whence came you, and what would you have?" He answered, "I have eaten and drunk in the presence of the King, and He has taught in our streets." Then they asked him for his certificate, that they might go in and show it to the King. So he fumbled in his bosom for one, but found none. Then said they, "Have you none?" But the man answered not a word. So they told the King; but He would not come down to see him, but commanded the two Shining Ones that conducted

Christian and Hopeful to the city, to go out and take Ignorance, and bind him hand and foot, and bear him away. Then they took him up and carried him through the air, to the door that I saw in the side of the hill, and put him in there. Then I saw that there was a way to hell, even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction.' Here is the indispensable certificate: 'Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.'

II. It is sufficient,—'The Righteousness of God.'

You will see that I have been understanding by this expression, the Righteousness of God, not God's attribute of righteousness, which cannot be imputed to us, nor simply God's method of justification, but what I believe to be the meaning of the Apostle here, the surety-righteousness of the Mediator, the sole origin and purpose of which is our justification; that is, it would have never existed but for the scheme of redemption,—but for its being the only way in which we could be reconciled to God. Through the whole life on earth of the God-man this robe of imputed righteousness was weaving. The Cross imparted to it its last and crowning worth and glory, and now, faultless and sufficient, it is offered to every lost sinner who will come to Christ and believe.

1. *It is the Righteousness of God, because He provided it.*—Ah, friend, never say that God drives a hard bargain, when you are told that without shedding of blood there is no remission. Where does the money come from to pay your debt? What blood is it that is the blood of the sacrifice? Where is the lamb for the burnt-offering? It is not of your providing. You have to stand by and see God's inflexible justice secretly conspiring with His mercy for your salvation. You have to stand by and see Him pay His own debt in a way costly and wondrous beyond all understanding. It is answer enough to the cavils of the enemy, and of our own discontented heart, that the righteousness which God insists on, and which, when it is provided, makes our salvation so sure, is of God's own providing, is 'the righteousness of God.'

2. *It is the Righteousness of God, because it is the God-man's Righteousness.*—Yea, twice over may we call it God's righteousness, for God provided it, and God in human flesh achieved it. It is human, it is a righteousness which fulfilled itself in our place, amidst all the penalties and obligations, all the duties, snares, temptations, difficulties which make up our experience, and so could satisfy for us. But it is divine, for this Jesus is God as well as man. Through the whole of His humanity shines the glory of Jehovah, and His righteousness has the lustre and purity

and infinite worth of Godhead,—is a reflection in earthly form of the eternal righteousness of God. And so—

3. *It is the Righteousness of God, because He will and must accept it.*—Bearing his stamp all through, beginning, carried on, ending in Himself, no sinful man or sinless angel has traced one line of it, has contributed to it in the least degree. Search and try it, Satan, if thou wilt, with all thy lynx-eyed skill, and it will foil thee. Yea, let the awful light of God's countenance shine on it, and, like God's flowers beneath the microscope, it will show all the more perfect and spotlessly fair. Put it on, Christian, and you will be cased in armour of proof,—you will shine with no other than God's own light,—you will hear that voice, —'Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.' It is the righteousness of God.

III. It is not a legal Righteousness, for it is 'without the law.'

Does that mean that this righteousness is illegal, or lawless, that it is not conformed to the law of God, but in some sort at variance with it? Nay. The state of the case in brief is this. The righteousness, in respect of the achieving or fulfilling of it by Christ the Lord, is legal, in the sense of being in perfect accordance with God's law, and of utterly satisfying God's law; but in

respect of the imputation of it to us, of the partaking of it by us, is not legal, it is not dependent on any obedience of ours; it is, so far as we are concerned, without the law and the works of the law.

In the case of us sinners, the law does nothing but accuse and condemn. We have so fallen out with it, that it speaks to us of nothing but despair and death. Ay, and we need not rail at the law, as though it were some fierce enemy of ours quite apart from God; for the law is nothing but the justice of God written in our own hearts, and in the Bible translated into articulate speech. But we must be done with it, or there is no hope for us. And we are done with it, if we accept this righteousness of God. It comes to us over the body of the hostile law foiled and dead. It comes to us from the red battle-field of the Cross, in which death and he that hath the power of death were slain. Christ Jesus is 'the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' Oh, friends, this seems dry and hard, no doubt, but it means life and hope to you and me. It means that God has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. It means that God interposes His shield and saves us from all that are against us. It means that our black guilt and utter helplessness for aught that is good, which we shall never mend with all our trying, are

swallowed up and lost in the plenitude of His salvation. O broken law! we do not fear thee; thy stern commandments, which are so beyond our strength, thy curse, which feeds the fires of hell. For 'now the righteousness of God *without the law* is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.'

IV. It is the hope of all God's children: 'Being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets.'

Yes, dear friends, there never was but one certificate, as Bunyan calls it, which ever got a man into heaven. The faith in which Adam died, if he died in faith, is the faith in which every child of God shall die, till there be death no longer. Through the whole sweep of His kingdom's history, Christ might say of Himself and His imputed righteousness, 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the First and the Last.' This righteousness was to Moses the very core of the complex symbolism which he set up at God's command. This righteousness was the burden of Old Testament prophecy and psalm: to cast down the righteousness of men, and exalt the righteousness of God, Isaiah thundered in majestic words, and Jeremiah mourned in sackcloth, and Ezekiel testified by the rivers of Babylon. Of this righteousness David and Solomon, and all the Psalmists, spake and sang. It

was the hope of Abraham; it was the hope of Israel age after age: 'It was witnessed by the law and the prophets.'

And then in the New Testament Church—better understood by us perhaps—it is still the hope and the only one of every Christian soul. The noble army of martyrs drew strength from it to suffer and die. The afflicted have found it the true consolation; the fearful and anxious have attained through it to peace in believing. It has filled the little children's prayers with a holy boldness; it has cast over weary spirits the anticipated peace of heaven; it has made the dreariest, most painful deathbed a gate of paradise. And, even as it has been the only hope of all the ages, so has it been the only hope of all the lands and nations. Dusky faces have been lit up by it to a brightness like an angel's smile. From the burning zone to Labrador, it has made happy homes, and peaceful hearts, and the melody of hymns, and the grace of gentle words and deeds, and the hope of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus,—gathering, gathering, gathering out of all the ages, and all the world, a white-robed company to stand before the throne and sing, 'Worthy is the Lamb.' For now 'the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.' 'Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood,

out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.'

God does not mock you and me, my friend, with a phantom salvation, or with an unreal, imperfect, incomplete salvation. No; it goes down to the deepest depth of your need. It puts in your hand a title to pardon, and peace, and eternal life, as plain and legible as can be written with God's finger, and signed with His name and seal. This is the foundation of your peace, Christian, and well-spring of your joy. Come, poor sinner, and take it freely, for it is not more full than free. Come, and it will so enfold you, that your sins shall be hidden for ever, and your tattered raiment replaced by the fine linen clean and white, so that amidst the very purity of Heaven you shall stand as free and pure as any. Come to Jesus for it, that in bestowing it on you, He may see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Come, and you will join that multitude which from every city, age, and land, sweeps through the golden gate. 'Now the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.'

IV.

AN INEVITABLE QUESTION.

'What think ye of Christ?'—MATT. XXII. 42.

THE scene is laid in Jerusalem, in some court or chamber of the Temple. The fields where the sower scatters the seed of a harvest yet to be; the lake with its encircling summits and its murmuring shores; yea, even the comparative quiet of the village streets, of Cana or Nain or Nazareth, are far away. Jesus is in the great city, the unquiet heart of all the land. It is an atmosphere of bustle; of movement more or less troubled; of restless questionings. The wits and doctors of Jerusalem swarm around Him, armed at all points, resolute to sting him if they can. This Prophet of Galilee, like the Athenian philosopher, is the centre of an inquiring, keen-witted crowd, some of whom find in His words a heavenly wisdom, and others are desirous only to entangle Him in His talk. There is the Scribe, well read in Moses, and the Pharisee, with his

points of law, and the Sadducee, largely represented in modern times, who has searched through all divine and human things, and has found in all the heights and the abysses nothing but a reflection of his own conceited face. They must all break a lance with Jesus. They bring their sharpest wits to the encounter. They set very skilful traps for him. He uses no quirks or quibbles in reply. The blade which He wields is keen and bright, and as Aaron's rod swallowed up the rods of the magicians, it cuts through theirs as if they were made of wood. It is the truth,—the calm eternal truth,—and all the nets they spread for Him are rent like cobwebs; and all their lies or pretences of truth flee from it like owls from the break of dawn.

Then, as is usual with one who has been assailed in vain, he assumes the offensive. He has answered their questions, so that they have nothing to say. Will they be able to answer His? That is the point where the question of the text comes in. And last of all, after their final rout, He breaks into the very awful denunciations of the 23d chapter. He rains on the abashed heads of Pharisee and Scribe specially a torrent of woes. What a blow He dealt to the pride of the self-seeking teachers,—this true and only Prophet! What an exposure he made of the pretensions of the hireling shepherds, this

Good Shepherd of the sheep! The text comes in just when the tide of battle has begun to roll back from this invincible Jesus on his discomfited assailants. It was the Pharisees, in particular, whom he handled so sorely with His question, 'What think ye of Christ?' that 'no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.'

We have here—I. A Question for the Pharisees.

II. A Question for Everybody—'What think ye of Christ?'

I. A Question for the Pharisees. Notice two things about the Theology of the Pharisees:—

The Pharisees were legalists.—To them the law was a thing quite apart from the God who gave it. It was a matter of commandments, which could be duly labelled and numbered, and pitted the one against the other. They betrayed their own legalism, their own miserable external views of the law, when they asked Jesus, tempting Him (ver. 36), 'Master, which is the great commandment in the law?' The great commandment,—as if God's law could be divided and sub-divided, and one part of it kept and another broken, and obediences or sins could be reckoned up according to the respective values of the com-

mandments kept or broken! The Divine unity of God's law—one and indivisible—comes out grandly in His reply. He allows no distinctions of greater and less,—scarcely even a distinction of first and second. The first table of the law—not one part of it, but the whole—is with Him the first and great commandment; and the second table, not one part of it, but the whole, is the second great commandment, not less than but like unto the first; yea, these two are one; and *love* is the sum of all.

But the Pharisees were guilty of another kindred error. They were not only *legalists*, but also *deists*. Their dead orthodoxy on the subject of the law resulted in legalism; their dead orthodoxy on the subject of the unity of God, in deism. That there was but one living and true God every Israelite was bound to maintain in the face of the heathen nations. But this truth held embedded in it a yet larger truth, that this God who is one is also *three*. This the Pharisees refused to believe or accept in any wise; and so their monotheism or worship of the one living and true God became mere Deism, Unitarianism, or a denial of the Trinity. This doctrine of the Trinity had not been explicitly taught in the old time, but it had been implied; and to pious and humble souls it had unquestionably discovered itself as the truth of truths, as the master key to

the secrets of time and eternity. In the Old Testament Scriptures more voices than one had been heard, all of them unmistakably Divine. And one of these was the voice of their promised Messiah; and it was in connexion with Him, it was at His appearing in the world, that the doctrine of the Triune God was to be a hidden thing no more. You see, then, where the deism of the Pharisees began. They refused to entertain the thought of *a Divine* Messiah. It was a human one they craved—a man, and a man no better than they were, and a kingdom of this world, with all the pomp and pride which this world admires; and every Old Testament prophecy which seemed to imply more than this, they slurred over somehow.

The Lord had confounded their legalism; He was prepared to confound their deism too. 'What think ye of *Christ?*' He said. He asked this in the form of an abstract question, not as referring to Himself at all, though there was hidden in it, and, I doubt not, irresistibly suggested to them all, the yet more home-coming question, 'What think ye of Me?' What think ye of Christ? He said. What idea or expectation have ye formed concerning the promised Messiah? Define him to me? Where do you expect Him to come from? What do you expect Him to be? 'The Son of David,' they reply, and go no further; by

which they mean—a Prince of the royal line of Judah, a King among the kings, and that is all. It takes Him but a word or two to show how utterly inadequate is the account that they have given. Out of David's own mouth He proves that the promised Messiah was more than his son, was also his Lord, and on the right hand of Jehovah. He convicts them of faithlessness to their own Scriptures—of wilful misunderstanding of the plainest words of God. He sets Messiah before them as a diviner one than they had dreamed; yea, as Himself divine. Then they remember that He, this Jesus of Nazareth, had said, 'I and my Father are one.' It comes out, then, that he claims to be exactly what Messiah must be according to the prophecies. Strange lights seem to flash from His eyes, and play around His brow, as He stands before them there. A veil seems to be swiftly lifted,—an irresistible recognition of Him gleams across them for a moment; many hidden things are brought to light; there is a shaking among the dry bones, to be followed, let us hope, in some at least, by the breath of life, when the Lord puts to them this testing question, 'What think ye of Christ?'

II. But this question reaches further than the Pharisees. There are many deisms and legalisms

besides theirs which it puts to confusion. Every Gospel hearer comes face to face with it—is put into a corner by it. What a man thinks of Christ is the index of his ruin or of his salvation. You cannot hear of Him without some thought about Him; and according to that thought are you in an estate of condemnation or in an estate of grace. For Christ is the light of the world, and so it is nearness to Him or distance from Him that makes the light or makes the darkness. He is like a well-spring in the midst of the desert, around which there is a circle of verdure which fades at its outer rim into an arid waste. Into this lost world He has come a Saviour, and there is no salvation in any other; and by His very coming, by His very presence, it has been put to every man, Choose Him or refuse Him; Christ or hell; Come or depart. Through all your life this question follows you—at every turn it starts up and demands your consideration. Only on the grave's brink will it leave you, because then your answer will be given irrevocably. 'What think ye of Christ?'

Notice these things then:

1. *Whether you will or no, you have a certain thought of Christ.*—You Gospel-hearers, I mean. I do not know but that it might be said with some truth that every living being has a Christ

of some sort, whether he has ever heard of Jesus of Nazareth or no. A dim sense of some prevailing disorder in the world, dim premonitions of a remedy, of a fountain of immortality somewhere to be found; in especial of a Deliverer mighty to save, seem never to have wholly forsaken the most depraved of mankind. The most barbarous races have never quite lost the idea of God, ay, and therewith, also, of a propitiation needed, and somehow provided, if they could only discover where and how. Into their gloomy lives has shone, may we venture to say? albeit sadly veiled and darkened from them, the fair face of the Christ; and we know not how far, without having seen or heard, they believed. We know not how far they

> 'Groping blindly in the darkness,
> Touched God's right hand in that darkness,
> And were lifted up and strengthened.'

But you who have heard of Christ from your earliest years, you certainly cannot escape this question, 'What think ye of Christ?' You know how the oft-repeated name stamped itself on your heart and memory; how no story was better known to you than the story of Jesus; no places in the world more familiar to you than Nazareth and Calvary. There was a face that came through your childish dreams with its mute appealing; there is a voice, a presence, which

hath been with you all your days, and which, however you went away from it, starts up ever again before you, and would not leave you alone. Not in the sanctuary only, not even in your own closet, and over your open Bible, but when you were busiest and gayest; ay, most reckless and wicked,—you heard a step behind you, you heard a whisper at your ear, you felt a breath on your cheek, as of one who followed you always and would not be driven away. Perhaps you were angry; perhaps you were sullen and careless; perhaps you were foolhardy and defiant; but will ye nill ye—beside you, above you, around you, within you, is One pressing home this question, forcing an answer from you which seals your safety or your doom,—'What think ye of Christ?'

2. *Your thought of Christ will correspond to your sense of want and sin.*—So it was with the Pharisees. They were not troubled with guilt to be atoned for. Their externalism of sacrifice was, they thought, enough to dispose of all that. They had no cravings after spiritual life, after a Divine communion, after a kingdom of God which should be within them. Their long prayers satisfied their aspirations after the unseen, and they had a vivid sense of the pleasantness of popular applause, and of the good things which would be in store for them if the temple and the Mosaic

law and the throne of the house of David should be restored to their ancient splendour. And so, according to their sense of want and sin, was their thought of the Messiah. A death on the cross was the last thing they expected of Him. Divine they had no desire that He should be. An earthly monarch with victory following the steps of his armies; with boundless wealth in his coffers; with honours to bestow on those who basked in the sunshine of his smile,—that would satisfy them; yea, they cared for nothing else than that. They said, 'He is the Son of David.'

And so it will ever be. Every man has his Christ, and every man will make his idea of the Saviour to correspond to the need which he feels. Perhaps you may say that I am forgetting the Bible and the Catechism, forgetting that there is an orthodox doctrine about Christ which all orthodox Christians must and do believe. I do not forget these; but you know that orthodox doctrine—objective truth, is utterly helpless and valueless till it find its way down from a man's head to his heart; and though a man may have received with his understanding the most approved doctrine about Christ, he may have at bottom an idea of Christ which is not the Bible's nor the orthodox theologian's, but his own; and which, for all his assent to these, may be quite different from them and independent of them.

You have a thought of Christ—must have it whether you will or no. The truth of God has been bearing in on you from without, carrying with it the right conception. But then you know the daylight is most useless to the blind; the green of the spring-time to jaundiced eyes; the sea cannot pour itself into an egg-cup; and it will be according to the void there is in your heart, according to your sense of sin and want, that you will apprehend, or be apprehended, of the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Oh, little do men think that their treatment of this good Saviour is an infallible index to their own character; that He is testing them, and that by every thought they think and every word they say about Him, they are plainly revealing what manner of men they are. Let me hear your honest mind about Christ. I do not mean what you learned in the Catechism, but what you have thought and felt and done about Him for yourself, and I will tell you infallibly the state in which you are before God, the things you have attained to, the things you lack as yet. (1.) Are you simply careless about Him, as very many professing Christians are? Is He your theme of a Sunday, and never in your head all the week? What you have to find out, friend, is, that you are a lost sinner under God's wrath and curse. (2.) Have you taken up with the fine new views

about Him, which make Him simply the noblest of mankind, the most distinguished of literary characters; in fact, higher and grander, but of the same kind, with Socrates and Plato and Shakespeare? The secret of these views—besides the want of a conviction of sin, which always comes in somewhere—is chiefly, I think, a singular self-conceit and want of sense. (3.) Is He to you the only way of escape from hell, the only hope of heaven, the only peace with God, the only healer, guide, guardian, friend? You would not think of Him so, if you did not know Him a little; if your heart were not going out with a great cry to Him in the bitter consciousness of its own need, and yet withal with a sweet, dim sense of His mercy.

And then within the pale of His own people—of those who think of Him as He loves to be thought of—as He verily is,—one knows not what heart-regrets may be revealed by that particular idea or view of Christ which nestles most deeply in the believing soul. Thus Simeon and Anna will think of Him as the hope of the Church—the Blessed One whose coming will change the night to day, because they are of those who wait for the consolation of Israel; and the woman who was a sinner will think of Him as a Shepherd going after His wandering sheep until He find them, because He hath sought and found

out the lost; and Paul, the theologian, will think of Him as the centre of a Divine plan, as the Redeemer in whose death condemnation was changed to justification, death to life, wrath and enmity to hope and peace; and Peter, the soldier of the Cross, will think of Him as a Master to follow through ranks of foes, yea, to prison and to death; and John, the beloved, will think of Him as a most precious stay for tottering limbs, a place of repose for weary heads, a haven for the storm-tossed, an eternal light and life and love; and Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, will think of Him as a household friend—as one to be ministered to—at whose feet to sit, with whom to hold near and continual fellowship; and dying Stephen will think of Him as one who, with outspread arms, waits to receive the departing spirit. He is a many-sided Saviour. There is no need which He cannot supply; no want which He cannot fill. And so those who love Him will think of Him as the very Saviour they need, whatever their need may be. As the day changes, their strength will change; and whichever way you turn, my believing friend, and wherever your lot may be cast, you will see before you—infinitely varied, and yet still the same—Jesus the Beloved. There may be many answers, then, from the Lord's own people to this question, and each one of them a gem in His crown, each one of them

a thread or fold of radiance in the rainbow of His glory.

There are three things which I would mention in conclusion; three things which must have place in your thought of Him.

First, *Think of Him as Divine.*—And not as the Pharisees. Think of Him—this Jesus of Nazareth—this loving Saviour—this dying Lamb, as being very God of very God. The early Christians had to retain and defend that thought of Him in the face of scoffing and unbelief. But although it be admitted in words by most that Jesus is the Son of God, there is a humanitarianism, a degraded view of the Saviour, from which Christians are not safe. Think of Him as much as you like as the Man of Sorrows; think of Him as much as you like as the Mediator standing between God and you; but think of Him at the same time as Himself God. His love is none other than God's love, for he that hath seen Him hath seen the Father.

Secondly, *Think of Him as Priest and Sacrifice.*—Oh! let no shallow talkers, sinners that prate about sin as if it were rather a misfortune than a fault, yea, rather commendable than otherwise, rob you of that thought. The blood of atonement, the justification by faith,—these are the preserving salt of the Church,—these are the only foundations of Christian faith and hope. To think of Him as King of kings, and testify for His Headship, is

not enough; to regard Him as the Prophet of prophets, the revealer of God, is not enough. Remember Gethsemane! remember Calvary! Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!

Thirdly, *Think of Him as a present Saviour, and sure to come again.*—The most faultless system of truth, the most accurate views of the Person and work of Immanuel, will be dead and dark to you, if you do not believe and realize that on yon Cross we did not see the last of Jesus here on earth; that He is here this minute to save you, to wash you in His blood, to go with you everywhere and every day, and teach, and help, and comfort; to be with you when you die, and take you home with Him, that where He is ye may be also; ay, and that as He ascended into heaven before the astonished eyes of His disciples, He shall return from it in glory before a still more astonished world; 'for he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. He who testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly.' Oh! see to it that through faith in Him, and love to Him, and hope in His mercy, you be able to reply, 'Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.'

V.

THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

'We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.'
2 Cor. v. 10.

Does it not occur to you sometimes how difficult it is for you to realize your own death? You could fancy, if it were not for the painfulness of so doing, the death of your friend and neighbour, of your minister, of any member of your family —the vanished face, the voice fallen silent, the pageantry of the funeral, the sort of things said mournfully, with a justice and tenderness which come too late, of the unconscious dead. But try in your imaginings to take yourself the central place, and suppose that it is your spirit which is returning to its Maker, and you will find it very difficult indeed. Because this time you must go far deeper, and fill into the picture the thoughts and feelings of the soul which is departing, and that soul yours.

To die, to depart, to leave all accustomed things, all known sights and sounds, for things

unseen and eternal, for a life as real and intense as this life is; but, oh! inconceivably, unutterably different. *That* is as really before us as anything ever was which came and made part of our history. If we have some function of an important sort to discharge, some place to visit at a distance of certain days, our thoughts will run on these whether we will or no, and furnish us with mind-pictures so distinct that we can retain them and compare them with the reality when it comes, so that we speak of it exceeding or falling short of our expectations. But those strange experiences which may come in to wither our hopes, and forbid our expectations to be in the very least degree realized, our thoughts will not, cannot run on them; and even though we may have certain dreams of rest with Christ,—over the dark valley and before the judgment-seat there hangs an impenetrable veil. What is so difficult, so painful, is scarcely ever done; and to other spirits, who have not to pass through death, and so, it may be, can far better than we appreciate its awfulness, the strange spectacle is presented of a serenely unconscious world, living for the present hour, or for some anticipated earthly future, and yet, every seventy years or so, swept clean of its inhabitants, and peopled by a new generation.

There is much about death and judgment, perhaps, on which God would not have us dwell, lest

the worthlessness of our present life, and the exceeding darkness of the shadows at its close, should produce a kind of paralysis, and we should lose our interest in mundane things, and make no effort to live heartily, busily, and well. But that they are facts, and facts to be apprehended by us not generally, but as in our history as surely as to-night and to-morrow are, God would have us very fully realize. The sad spectacle of death very near us, removing a well-known figure and face, a familiar voice far away beyond our ken, is the best help we have, the most impressive admonishment that our turn shall come, that where our father, our brother, hath gone, we must follow. He has gone by no untravelled path, but along a road trodden by innumerable feet, and into which all our paths are tending, like tributary brooks to the great river: 'We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.'

'To be accepted of him,' is the apostle's remedy for all uncertainties, is the one condition which presence or absence, time or eternity, life or death, cannot affect at all,—and to this end he and his fellows labour. But there is something which, above all, makes them see to it that their life be a true and everlasting life, which is superior to any change, and will stand any test, and that is contained in the words of the text: 'We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.'

We have here—1. The Judgment-seat of Christ.
2. A Place of *Revelations.*
3. A Place where *all* shall be.

1. *The Judgment-seat of Christ.*—The judgment-seat was a familiar word to the men of Paul's time, when the whole world was under Roman rule and law. Thereon the deputy or governor sat and administered justice or injustice, as the case might be,—as we read of Pilate's judgment-seat and Gallio's, and the judgment-seat of Felix and Festus. Sometimes set in a splendid hall, sometimes in a room, dark and obscure as the den of an inquisitor,—it was ever environed with a special awfulness. The Roman law was distinct and stern, and the strong arm to enforce it was never wanting. And, therefore, whatever might be the character of the man who sat for the time on the judgment-seat, there was no mistaking, and no resisting his stern awards. Think of him sitting with the might of the Roman empire at his back, and life or death hanging on the words which should proceed from his lips; think of the accused trembling before him, waiting his decision, which, if unfavourable, would shut out all hope for ever,—perhaps confident of the result, perhaps cowering down under the darkest fear. A place it was of strange revelations; of the discerning of thoughts, and words, and deeds; of the

rending asunder of many professions and pretences; the scene of many a crisis in human histories; the establishment and vindication of one, the irretrievable ruin of another,—joy unspeakable, or sorrow only to be quieted by death.

From these earthly tribunals we are lifted up in thought to another far grander, the fountain-head of far more momentous issues—the judgment-seat of Christ. Every year and month and day we are on our way thither, to join the vast multitude which is there arraigned at the bar of the King of kings. Who shall imagine, ever so faintly, the splendours of that judgment-hall, of that high tribunal, which the Son of Man himself calls 'the throne of his glory?' His glory—the glory of the only-begotten of the Father—surrounds it with a halo of unspeakable brightness. If you led a ragged child, who knew of nothing but the dimness and squalor of the close he lived in, to some noble palace, and entered its spacious doorway with him, and passed through its richly-garnished rooms, holding his trembling hand, his bewilderment of wonder were as nothing to that which awaits you and me when, by doors which are guarded by angel-sentinels, and between the shining ranks of the host of God, we pass into that presence which swallows up all created glory in its own. Christ's judgment-hall is vast as the surface of the world, and His judgment-seat is 'the great white throne.'

It is *Christ's* judgment-seat, and that is the true secret of its splendour and its awfulness. 'I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened' (Dan. vii. 9, 10). 'And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.' It is on Him you must fix your eye. Wherever, whatever, the judgment-seat may be, matters little. Its exceeding glory, and the joy or the woe which attend it, are due to Him. The judgment-seat of Christ is but Christ come to judgment, and summoning to His bar all the generations which have come and gone from the earth, like spring-blossoms or autumn fruits. *Look*, I pray you. Take in, as you can, the awful meaning of His sitting on the judgment-seat. You must face this sight actually and visibly after a little while; and, oh! it will be a thousand times less terrible, if you face it as you may face it now.

Let us fancy ourselves among the vast multitude which are hurried into the Judge's presence. A strange morning, truly, that judgment morning.

Not a soul of all the millions of mankind but is awakened now to the realities of eternity. All infidelities, all scepticisms, all heathenish idolatries, all stoutheartedness and indifference are vanished, and the crowd that streams to the great centre, which controls and attracts all, is a *believing* crowd,—believing to rejoice, or believing, as the devils believe, to tremble. Behold at last—revealed in a light which searcheth our inmost soul, bedimming all else with its unutterable radiance, the judgment-seat of Christ and Christ on the judgment-seat! What awful recognitions now! for all shall know Him; ay, very many, you and I among the rest, shall recognise Him as one we have heard of and seen before. Shall I put in words the thoughts which flash with unimaginable swiftness across the spirits of those thus gathered, perhaps uttering themselves in cries of agony or joy, or buried in a silence even more impressive. One stands trembling in every limb, cowering as under an uplifted lash, and yet with his eyes fascinated to the King, most glorious and beautiful, who sitteth on the judgment-seat,—looking on Him whom he hath pierced, and saying within himself, 'Alas! it is He! the very Jesus whom I despised and rejected; whom I kept knocking at the door of my heart, even till He went away. Yes; He gave me time, I cannot deny it; and He came, and

came, and came; and I have been hearing of Him since the time I could remember anything —and all in vain. Did I believe there was such a Son of Man? Yes, I did: but somehow I did not care whether or no; and, oh! it is too late now,—too late! too late! Alas! I know what He will say to me, for I had it in His own words: "Depart from me, ye cursed." He is looking at me. What shall I do? Where shall I hide myself? Fall on me, ye mountains. Cover me, ye rocks, from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!'

Behold another, so humble-looking, but so happy, now shading his face with his hands, as though the light were too bright for his unaccustomed eyes, now glancing up again to the glory which overflows him like a sea. 'Yes; it is He! Oh! surely this is too good to be true, that with those eyes of mine I should see my Saviour, whom, having not seen, I loved. Yes, it is the worn and pain-stricken face of Calvary; the thorn-crowned brow; the eyes which grew dim with crying, and were as fountains of tears; so changed, and yet the same. "My Beloved is mine, and I am his." I said *that* when we struck hands together on the earth long ago; may I say it now? Yes, I may, with tenfold emphasis. He remembered poor me on the cross. He will not forget me on the throne. He promised me that I should behold

His glory, that I should see Him as He is, and now the day of His vengeance is in His heart, and the year of His redeemed is come.'

Which of these, my friend, will you be? One or other of them, I know; for ye are not the heathen that know not God; and if you carry yourselves proudly as the first, this text, as we shall see, assures you that you shall, before long, fall into the self-condemnation I have pictured. This is no imaginary scene I have described, or imaginary only in them for which I have given, but a terrible reality hastening with rapid steps. The very greatness of the change makes it hard to realize; from sitting so peacefully here a congregation of worshippers, to standing arrayed before Christ's judgment-seat. And yet we know what changes a day may make, to a family whose head is gone, to a church whose most distinguished leader is reft away, to a nation which mourns an empty place beside the throne—Great changes! and yet little as compared with the transference of all the family, and all the Church, and all the nations, to Christ's judgment-seat: 'We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.'

2. A Place of *Revelations.*—We must all *appear.* The word 'appear' is ambiguous, for it means either simply to be present, to be made manifest as we are, or to seem what we are not. The first meaning naturally occurs in connexion with a seat of

judgment, appearing at which often means simply being present in answer to a summons. But in this case, the Greek word, as well as the context, lead us to interpret 'we must appear' as meaning we must be manifested; it must be made evident to ourselves and to everybody what manner of men we are. The judgment-seat of Christ is a place of strange revelations and disclosures; of discerning between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth Him not. It is so, because it is His judgment-seat, before whom every lie and pretence must fail, and the soul in its true character stand disclosed. This discerning, testing office of Christ, of whom it was foretold that He should sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and who declared a great fact, which was illustrated through the whole of His earthly ministry, in these words, 'He that is not with me is against me,' shall reach the climax of its manifestation at that judgment-throne; and this almost without a word from Him, because in the very light of His holy and heart-searching presence the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. He 'appeareth' at last in His true glory. His people 'appear' in the divineness of life which, till now, was hid with Christ in God. His enemies appear in a vileness which no hypocritical shams can any longer conceal,—the subjects of Satan, the children of wrath, the heirs of hell.

> 'Neither man nor angel can discern
> Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
> Invisible, except to God alone,
> By His permissive will, through heaven and earth.'

Hypocrisy, which counterfeits every truth of God with a devil's lie, which can transform Satan himself into an angel of light, and can contrive a mask for every evil character, for every complexion of wickedness—which is the very worst and most dangerous outcome of our corrupt hearts, giving us up to strong delusion, to believe a lie concerning ourselves, and making us liars also to men and to God—which, in a less degree or a greater, has pervaded and crusted over all this fallen world, so that we never see fairly and frankly our brother's face, nor does he see ours,—which has its chiefest haunts, as near as may be to the ark of God, simulating worship, simulating zeal, simulating piety, simulating the grace of the Spirit. Hypocrisy, which has never ceased to tempt us to seem what we are not, to profess plausibly that we are the Lord's people, while we serve divers lusts and pleasures; and to be mere men of the world, with the look, and tone, and manner, and phrase which is supposed to indicate the children of God. Hypocrisy shall be banished for ever in that solemn hour; and that network of lies which is woven around human society, around the life and heart of every man, around the Church of God, shall be rent and flung to the far winds of

heaven—'We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.'

Oh! every darkness shall be dispelled, and every false light put out, in the terrible clearness of that day. What unmasked faces! what secret hearts laid bare! what hidden histories revealed! what reputations vindicated or destroyed for ever! 'There are first which shall be last, and there are last which shall be first.' Yon self-satisfied professor, who was so high in his principles, and so loud and keen in his censures, laying burdens on other men's backs, and never touching them with one of his fingers,—what a poor creature will he be that day! And this talkative one, who knew so much, and phrased so finely, and was so ready with his avowals of an interest in Christ, but had lost himself altogether in self-complacency,—what a day for him! And that poor rich man, who was of such consequence among his fellow-worms, all for the money in his purse (which we worship, every one of us, say what we will),—what a day for him! And that humbled, chastened soul, which did its good deeds without caring to be in the fashion or in the newspapers, and was faithful in the least things, and went anew to the sprinkled blood every day, and hungered and thirsted to be Christlike—loving, gentle, lowly; poor in all the things which the world, properly so called, or the worldly element in the

Church, esteemeth to be riches,—what a day for him! The beggar as king now, the little one bidden 'come up higher;' yea, 'to sit with me on my throne, as I am set down with my Father on his throne.'

3. A Place where *all* shall be.—We must *all* appear.

All. It is a very broad word, measuring round the world, and from end to end of its history. The past, the present, and the future meet in it. It marks the point to which all lines converge, and from which they go forth in different directions to meet no more. One or two thoughts it naturally suggests.

1. *That here all distinctions are levelled at last.*—The distinctions which the ages make, the distinctions of climate and culture, the distinctions of rank and fortune, of intelligence, authority, power. As in a graveyard where the green turf gently undulates over all who slumber there, and only the crumbling memorial stones can tell that any difference ever existed. The graves over which many tears are shed, the graves where the great ones of the earth are laid with funereal honours, the graves in which tired royalty lays down its aching head, the monuments and the mausoleums, and the many headstones around the old parish church, are all but graves, and hide

in them only a little dust which is fast returning to its kindred element. As in death, so is it in judgment, save that the levelling is more manifest and solemn when it is those living now that are grouped together,—'I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.'

2. *That the speaker includes himself.*—One is ever tempted in painting such a picture to leave one's-self out; but it cannot be. When you sketch a landscape from some good point of view, your pencil traces in it the hill, and valley, and stream; the ruined tower, the fields, the trees, the cottages with their smoke curling into the clear air, and the children gambolling round them; but you yourself, and the place where you are posted, are not, and cannot be, in the picture. Not so with Paul, or with any one who would hold up to you the terrible glory of the judgment-seat; for *all* must be there,—you and I together. No lookers on, I assure you; but ourselves swallowed up in the awful interest of that day. We watch for souls as those who must give account at the last —'We must *all* appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.'

3. *That it is a very personal matter.*—As with him who speaks of it; so with you, it is something in actual prospect. Not something which may be hindered and put aside; not like some terrible things which are going on in the world,

but which may find you in your grave when they do come; for, with the exception of death, the judgment is the only thing which must come, whatever else may not. Next year may find you with your fortunes wrecked, with your family scattered or dead, with the strongest and tenderest ties rent asunder; but next year, with all that, will have just marked one year off the tale of years which are between you and the judgment-seat. But in front of the great certainty there is a great uncertainty; and that is *when* this day shall come. You may say, Well, it may be a thousand years yet. What though it were? Have you all that time to look forward and prepare? Nay, nay, nay; not a day perhaps; not an hour; not till the next stroke of the clock it may be. Because, death is all the same to you as judgment,—fixing you immoveably in the state you die in, till the day when your doom shall be proclaimed. After death the judgment; and the space between, whatever it be, however long or short, is no time for repentance, is no day of merciful visitation; in respect of the change which you must undergo, if you are to be saved, it counts for nothing. In the cities which a volcanic eruption buried, all things were found, after the lapse of centuries, as they were in that moment of awful destruction; and though the inmates of the houses were but skeletons or heaps of bones, all the

little features of their household life which went on till the fatal moment, were stereotyped there for ever. So when death puts his cold finger on your forehead, and seals up the fountains of your life, though your spirit cannot die, yet, in its inmost character, it is fixed against all change, and, whether holy or filthy, it passes from death to the judgment-seat of Christ.

One word more, and it is this: The escape from the terrors of the judgment to its triumphant joys is by anticipating it now. Christ is the test now as He shall be then. The only difference being, that now His decision concerning you is spoken in a still small voice, while there it shall break over you like a thunder peal. Oh listen to it, I pray you! Christ sees through your hypocrisy, your complacent self-esteem, to your guilty, unseemly, corrupted spirit; and by His love He warns you, and by His Cross He invites you, to come to Him, and through Him to be reconciled to God. Won't you come? It is the same voice you hear to-day, saying, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' which, with its tones awfully deepened, even like to the noise of many waters, shall then say, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'

VI.

EL-ELOHE-ISRAEL.

'And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-aram, and pitched his tent before the city. And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money. And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel.'—GEN. xxxiii. 18-20.

THESE three verses record some of the most decisive and important events in the whole history. The things on which the destinies of men and nations turn are often minute and scarcely perceptible. The critical moments which determine the character of years and ages often pass by almost unobserved. Jacob's arrival at Shalem, and his purchase of ground there, and his building of an altar there, and calling it by this very glorious name,—these mark an epoch in the history scarcely second to any in importance. Here the visible Church and kingdom of God changed its aspect. It ceased to be a family, and became a tribe. Jacob was not the head of one household, but of a group of households, which grew

and swelled till each household of the tribe became a tribe itself, and the aggregate of the whole a nation. Of course this process of amplification was a gradual one, but it began decidedly when, separated from Laban, separated also from Isaac, Jacob and his sons established themselves in the Promised Land.

Separated from Isaac, I say, for Isaac was not dead, nor his household broken up. You may wonder that there is no mention of Jacob's return to his father's house after his peace had been made with Esau, and perhaps may conclude from the omission that he never did return home till he went to assist at Isaac's funeral. But that is a mistake. The sacred writers handle their theme with a freedom which superficial interpreters of the Scripture do not understand. Secure in the possession of infallible truth, they are not assiduous to specify all the ends and corners of the matter in hand; they confine themselves to their peculiar theme, whatever it may be at the time, without going aside to set forth its connexion with something else about which they are not immediately concerned. There was no occasion here for treating further of the peculiar affairs of Isaac. The blessing which he bestowed on Jacob made *him* the head of the family, set himself, as it were, aside,—*emeritus*, superannuated;—and so, for the purposes of the covenant-history, there was no

further need for alluding to Isaac, unless to record the age to which he survived, and his death. But that Jacob, wherever settled in the land, went often to visit his old father,—no great distance, wherever he might be,—is quite certain. Though there had been no hint of any communication between the families, it would have been absurd to doubt it for a moment. But there is one such incidental hint, which is often more convincing than a direct proof. At Bethel dies Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, who must have been transferred from Isaac's household to Jacob's when her old mistress was dead. She must have been for some time in the younger family, for so valued and honoured was she there, that they called the oak-tree beneath which they made her grave, Allon-bachuth, the Oak of Tears.

There are some minor matters in these verses which I would dwell on for a little, before proceeding to expound that in them which strikes the key-note of all the after history of the El-elohe-Israel.

1. The name of Jacob's settlement in the vale of Shechem is significant. Ver. 18. 'Jacob came to *Shalem*, a city of Shechem.' Shalem, that is, Peace. This name, Salem, was certainly a favourite name in Canaan, and it is possible that there may have been a city of that name in the fertile valley, or that Jacob may have given to his

own settlement, or to some place near it, the name Salem, which it held ever after. We cannot fail to be attracted by this significant word Salem, and to inquire whether there be any reason in Jacob's spiritual history for its employment in such a connexion. And such a reason is not hard to find. Those were the words with which Jacob went forth from Bethel unto the eastern land, and which he recalled now that his wandering feet had brought him home again: 'Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house *in peace*, then shall the Lord be my God.' I see the record of that vow in the Shalem which is in the land of Canaan, where Jacob settled after his return from Syria, and in the altar which he builded there, calling the name of it El-elohe-Israel.

2. Jacob's purchase of a piece of ground is significant. Ver. 19. 'He bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money.' There was a reason for this, no doubt, of a temporal kind, a reason for what, in the patriarchal history, had never happened before,—the purchase of a *dwelling-place*. The vale of Shechem would be a populous vale. The whole land was, no doubt, becoming more

thoroughly settled, and there would be less room in it for squatters, as they are called now-a-days. Almost every corner of it would be claimed by somebody, and so, to insure peaceful occupation of the site which he had fixed on for his dwelling-place, Jacob was obliged to buy it from the inhabitants of the neighbouring town.

But there was a deeper spiritual reason, if you think of it. This was a great step towards taking possession of the land. As the successful assailants plant their flag on some tower of a captured fortress, in token of their virtual possession of it, as the Spanish conquerors of America, when they landed on the new-discovered shores, hasted to set up a rude cross, and take possession of the land in the name of Christ and the King of Spain, so Jacob bought a parcel of a field in the vale of Shechem, and erected there an altar, and called the name of it El-elohe-Israel, thus acquiring for his posterity a right which they should come sword in hand to assert in after times, thus striking the first blow in a conquest which they should carry to its consummation.

But had not the same thing been done by Abraham? Nay. Mark the difference. Jacob purchased a site for his tent,—a dwelling-place. Abraham purchased only a grave. The one buying belongs to the position of those who died in faith, not having received the promise, whose only

share in the coming kingdom was to have it established around and over the place where they slept till the resurrection: the other buying to the position of those in whose experience the fulfilment is at least begun, whose task it is, not to hope and pray only for the kingdom, but to put their shoulder to the wheel, to join themselves to the soldiers of the Lord, to suffer and strive for the bringing of it in. A striking emblem, it seems to me, of the Old Testament time and the New. The ancient Church of God had to feed on hopes; its only possession in the world was, as it were, a grave in which to lay down its head in faith,—in which to sleep as the sown seed sleeps in the earth till the resurrection of the spring. But the New Testament Church has in Christ's Cross begun the conquest of the world, with a beginning which implies and involves the end, and from that living centre radiate both its victories and acquisitions, that are to be universal at the last. The one is like Abraham with his cave of Machpelah—place of sorrow, and loss and want, and yet withal of hope. The other is like Jacob, pitching his tent and setting up his altar, on the parcel of a field which was his own, and calling it by the name El-elohe-Israel.

3. Though all this be true, I believe that Jacob's settlement here in the vale of Shechem was a mistake, and implies a certain inattention to God's

will, a certain disposition, lingering still, to adopt God's ends, no doubt, but to take his own way to them. It is very plain that Jacob quite understood the important meaning of his settlement in Canaan, of the purchase of a piece of ground and the erection of an altar. But he made a sad omission, in which I suspect his old wilfulness and creature-wisdom peep out again. He did the right thing, but he *did it at the wrong place.* If I were to ask you, before you knew anything of Jacob's return to Canaan, what would be the first place he would be sure to come to,—what would be the place which was richest in gracious memories, and to which he would repair that he might recall the blessed past, and gather increase of faith for present and future trial,—you would say at once, 'Bethel, by all means, Bethel.' And your feeling is the right one. Your instinct is true. It was natural and fit that he should go there and dwell there. Ay, and the course of the history makes it plain that God meant that he should. But he did not. In his old way,—for so does the old man break out in a child of God, to the shame and confusion of the new,—in his old way, he thought that Shechem would do just as well for God's purpose, besides being a more convenient and fertile place, and that if he kept God's *end* in view, it did not matter much about the *means.* I need not tell you how prolific in mischief this

proceeding of Jacob's was. Like Saul of Tarsus, he kicked against the pricks, and hurt himself seriously, and no wonder. My Christian friend, the old enemies will not be dead before you are. If your corruptions are walking softly, and letting you control them without much difficulty, I have only to say this, that they are gathering their breath for a spring which may roll you over and over in the mire. O keep you by this, which is the only safety for a man, 'By the grace of God I am what I am.' When I let go the grace of God, because I thought I could walk without a crutch, as I was pleased to call it, I know what happened. I can scarce think of it, it is so painful.

Dinah's shame, and the blood-stained hands of Levi and Simeon followed soon on this false move of Jacob's. Ay, and it is plain that there was a general backsliding in the family, even to the length of idolatry. There came no message from God, no repetition of the promise all these Shechem days. At last, God mercifully made the place in which Jacob was receiving such detriment too hot for him, and it became evident that he and his family must flee. 'And God said unto Jacob (ch. xxxv. 1), Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.' Oh! Jacob, Jacob,

have you forgotten it all so soon? 'Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.' I think the tears came in Jacob's eyes when he said that. God had touched him deeply with His tender words. The new man, the conqueror of Peniel, spoke then. In this humility and brokenness of spirit we recognise anew Israel, the Prince of God. Oh! Jacob, Jacob, if you had but said and done all this long ago, what misery you would have been spared! Again saved so as by fire. Oh man beloved of the Lord! Blessed are those who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation! Blessed are those who, even after going round by Shechem, are, by God's grace forgiving, restoring, brought to Bethel at the last!

4. The fact of Jacob's building an altar there and at Bethel, setting up the pillars, and pouring libations upon them, suggests to me this remark, that we are still on the old pre-Mosaic ground, free from its limitations, more at one with the universal spirit of Christianity. Under the Mosaic dispensation, when the worship of God was limited to one sanctuary and one altar, these

wayside sanctuaries, altars, and votive pillars were forbidden, with sin to those who made use of them. After the commandment of God had gone forth against them, they passed into the domain of will-worship, which is a subtle form of idolatry. These very altars and memorial-stones of Jacob's were misused in that way. This parcel of a field at Shechem gave a sort of sanction to the Samaritan will-worship, and Bethel was one of the places where Jeroboam set up the golden calves. All this goes to vindicate the wisdom of God in requiring a local and limited worship,—goes to show how necessary that was as a check to the polytheistic tendency of these early times.

But Jacob was free from this commandment, and so also are we. 'Wherever there is a praying soul at a dykeside,' one of the old covenanting preachers said, 'there is the Church of God.' And so, wherever there is need and danger, wherever, in the secrecy of the closet, on the busy street, in some lonely place beneath the open sky, in the darkness of the prison-house, amidst the stress of sudden perplexity, or the pain of swift-coming distress, or the heat and hurry of the battlefield, God is sought, with a long and earnest seeking, or a quick outcry of the spirit, like that of Nehemiah, when, with the wine-cup in his hand, and the Persian king waiting for his reply, he prayed unto the Lord,—*there* is an altar, a

sanctuary, a Bethel or house of God. 'He erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel.'

I. But now let us ponder for a little this deeply significant name of the altar, which is also, in fact —as we observe in the case of these names which are parallel to it, Jehovah-Nissi, Jehovah-Jireh, Jehovah-Shalom—a name of God: El-elohe-Israel—God, the God of Israel. Itself deeply significant, it becomes still more full of meaning from the point at which it comes in. As I said, it strikes the key-note of the subsequent history. All the difficulties of it,—all that is marvellous in it, can be solved at once by an appeal to this great name. For the proper understanding of it, I beg of you to carry with you this thought, a very fundamental one in Scripture, that like that other expression, 'the love of God,' this one has two meanings, tells two ways. It sets forth a property which is mutual,—two things which, in their deepest nature, are also one. *El-elohe-Israel.* There God is both possessor and possessed, and so is Israel too. God is Israel's God, because He claims a propriety in Israel, because Israel claims a propriety in Him. This beautiful tender reciprocity or mutualness, so full of strength and consolation and assured hope, is many ways insisted on in the Scripture. 'I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Ye shall be my people,

and I will be your God.' God for Israel, and Israel for God. Happy Israel! Gracious God!

1. *This name embodies and expresses Jacob's personal experience.*—In the building of the altar, and calling it by this name, he was conforming to God's will, though at the same time, as we said, he did still in some respects foolishly contend against it. The strife of nature in him had been against the belief of this, that God was his God, or, what is the same thing, against a gracious submitting of himself to God and God's covenant, and God's loving will. He sought to be his own God, self-contained, self-sufficient, and so he grievously sinned, and shamefully fell. But he is done with that now, for the most part, at any rate. He has capitulated, and in his capitulating triumphed. In weakness has he been strong. With prayers and tears has he prevailed at Peniel, and in token of this he uses for the first time the name he got then, Israel. He is content now that God should be his God. He is content to give over breaking that commandment, which is the hardest of all to keep, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me.' You and I, my friend, can make a god of anything. The young rich ruler in the Gospel had made a god of his possessions. Beauty, talent, fortune, rank; why, even health, strength, activity, afford plenty of material for idol-making. And when everything else fails me, I have always

myself to fall back on. But Jacob has given up that. God help us so to do. He has buried his heart's idol, which was his own skill and cunning. It is to be God *only* and *for ever*. And he knows that God on His side is willing to be his, and he doubts God's willingness no more. He knows that a Divine hand is stretched forth to hold him up and lead him, and save him, and crown him with every blessing, and he clasps and clings to it joyfully. He knows that the smile of God's countenance rests upon him, to make sunshine on his path, and he looks up to God with an answering smile. Why, this Jacob says, in his old-fashioned way, just what the wise king said from the mouth of the Church of God,—'My beloved is mine and I am his,'—just what the Apostle Paul said, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed unto him against that day.'

2. *This name is the motto of all Israelitish history; yea, of all the history of the kingdom of God.* —Jacob, unquestionably, meant by Israel himself. And yet I believe he did not mean himself alone. He knew, I am quite sure, that he got that name not for himself, but as a representative man, as one of the chiefs of the covenant history. By his Peniel victory many were to be benefited. His immediate descendants, for all their own trials and victories, were to dwell as it were in the shadow

of it. Perhaps, however, he had not the least idea how typical he was, but he was to be godfather to the promised seed, the nation which through him should spring from the loins of Abraham. Perhaps he did not know that El-elohe-Israel was a prophecy of the future of his race. The question whether he apprehended the full meaning of his own words or not, need not deter us from applying them ever so widely. The Spirit of God did oftentimes hide in the words and deeds of the holy men of old a kernel of sweet and profitable meaning, which none ever suspected less than they.

El-elohe-Israel. Start with that; let that glorious name, with its immeasurable meaning, impress itself on your soul. Let it ring in your ears continually while you read the history of this ancient people of God, and all miserable Colenso-difficulty will vanish before it. You will become aware of a presence which the carnal heart cannot discern, moving grandly through it all. It will become instinct with a meaning which is not limited and local, but for every country and every time, which sets at nought all attempts to fathom and measure it by human science and philosophy. Its marvels will surprise you no longer. When you know that Jehovah is there, you will not wonder to see His footprints. Deeps which you cannot search out,

knots which you cannot untie, will cease to trouble you, for you will know that you cannot but expect them when the King of this kingdom is not a man, but God; when all its laws and order are not human but divine. Egypt plague-stricken; the Red Sea affrighted; the awful sights and sounds of the wilderness; Joshua's eagle-swoop on Canaan; Jericho fallen; Jordan driven back; the glorious days of David and Solomon; the captivity; the Jesus whom Pilate crucified; the judgment following so surely on the sin; the deliverances so wondrous wrought by God: why, there is no history to be mentioned in the same breath with that Hebrew history, so grand and impressive, so vivid in its illustrations of God's mercy and wrath; and the secret of it all is in this word, El-elohe-Israel.

But you may take the name Israel less literally still. Let it mean the church of God in every age, the living in Jerusalem. Take the whole sweep of the kingdom's history,—take the life and experience of every sheep of the shepherd's flock, and these are but a manifestation of the glory there is in this, *El-elohe-Israel.* On that Cross of Golgotha, above the thorn-crowned head, to a believing eye, the scoffing inscription which Pilate set there, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews,' is effaced, and instead there shines out this legend, *El-elohe-Israel.* At the end of the

vista through which lies the church's path, how near, how far, we know not, there is an unspeakable brightness, a better dawn, which is the Advent of a King, before whom, as He comes, they proclaim this name, *El-elohe-Israel.* It is the deathless hope of a child of God, with the assurance of pardon in it through the blood of the covenant, of acceptance with God, of everlasting life and glory. It is the battle-cry of the Christian warrior, which strikes his enemies through with terror and nerves him with invincible might. It is the new song of the ransomed church in earth and heaven; the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints. O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God.

VII.

FRUIT AND FUEL.

'Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.'—JOHN XV. 4-6.

THE union between Christ and His people is a vital one, and therefore an abiding one. It is a matter of life and death. If it exist not between your soul and Him, or if, having existed, it could be severed, the result were simply withering decay, death. In the branch severed from its parent vine, in the amputated limb which must be buried out of sight, behold *your* likeness if you are not Christ's, if you abide not in Him. Well He knows the deathful effect of severance from Him; well He knows how true and deep and full your life will be if you are verily His; and so, may we not discern a tone, not only of calm direction, but of earnest expostulation and entreaty, in His saying, 'Abide in me, and I in you?'

What a round completeness these words have! The abiding is mutual. The union is most real and vital, looked at from either side. The husband-and-wife union, though it does not go far enough, may help us to understand it a little. In a true marriage, a marriage of wedded souls as well as of wedded lives, there is a mutual giving up and a mutual getting on either side. The husband is for his wife, and the wife is for her husband. They lose themselves, so to speak, to gain each other. She is her own no more, and he is his own no more, and yet the exchange is of such a sort, that it is all gain and no loss to both. Or we might think of meeting rivers, the largest stream and its tributary. At the point of confluence they blend their waters, and flow onwards under one name, but the wave that fills the wide channel, and laves more distant banks, has a double origin, is made up of all the converging waters. Even so do Christ and the believing soul become one. He gives Himself into its possession; it gives itself into His. The Divine embracing the human, the human clings to the Divine. On a pathway of love the Lord descends, and on a pathway of faith the soul climbs up to meet Him, and at the point where the meeting is consummated, does Christian life spring up and grow, and this commandment is obeyed, this idea realized, 'Abide in me, and I in you.'

As He had said before (John vi. 56), 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.' You abide in Christ by feeding on Him; you feed on Christ by believing in Him. The agent of all this, the cement of this wondrous building, fitly framed of Divine grace in human weakness, is *faith*. Faith is an ill-understood word, a name we have got to conjure with, so that if it did not do good work, one could almost wish it to go out of fashion. Coming to Jesus is faith, feeding on Jesus is faith, abiding in Jesus is faith. It is the making of our covenant with Him; it is the taking of Him as He is offered. It is the door by which He enters; it is the hand that holds Him; the eye that gazes on His beauty. Think of Christ and not of faith, just as when you look abroad over the world, you think of the world, and not of the act of seeing. Let there be solemn meeting, holy marriage, close clinging union between Christ and you. On His side you shall find He can make a resting-place of your outspread arms, a home of your poor heart; and on your side, through the grace of His Spirit, He can lift you, as it were, to the shelter of His bosom, to a fellowship with His Father and Himself, to 'a conversation which *is* in heaven.'

Dear friend, do you know anything of this indwelling Saviour? of this dwelling in the Saviour? What a sweet and holy mystery it is, and yet

every child of God, even the feeblest, knows it, and has experience of it. Without it there is no life, and there can be no fruit. Nine or rather ten times does this word *abide* occur in the first ten verses of this chapter. It is a thing to be insisted on. Between abiding and not abiding in Christ is all the difference between light and darkness, life and death, heaven and hell. And the door of this abiding-place is open. There is not one of you that will not be welcome if you come. I preach a full Christ and a free Christ, —how full! how free!—infinitely rich in mercy, and inviting not one but all.

But turn now to the rest of the fourth verse. It is a plain conclusion, surely: 'As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.' Cut the branch off, nay, for one moment sever it from the stem, and its life and fruitfulness are gone. See these flowers which are opening out in your garden under the fostering of rain and sun. You wish to make a nosegay of them, and you pluck one, and another, and another, that you may carry them in your hand, or make fragrant with them some room in your dwelling. But you have killed the flowers. You cannot put them back where they were, or bind together again the tender fibres which you have cut or torn asunder. With care on your part, they may fade

not quite so soon, but the moment you pulled them their doom was sealed,—fade and die they must. Even so were a soul plucked away from Christ even for a day, or were its abiding in Him not constant, but fitful, and mixed with entire departings from Him: were these things possible, did these things really happen, then life were gone, and the hope of fruit-bearing, altogether. In Christ is life eternal, out of Christ is everlasting death.

But is there not in all this something strange, something to be explained? Can the soul which has truly been in Christ ever cease to be in Him? Is there such a thing as living and bearing fruit, a true branch in the true vine, and then being cast away? To these questions I would answer *No*, most certainly. 'They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.' But there are two sides to the union between Christ and His people, as there are two parties to it. *He* will not break His covenant: His tender mercies will never fail. What He holds, He holds with no fickle grasp. Once His, means His always. But that is looking at the matter from the Lord's side, from the side of privilege and grace bestowed. It is to be looked at also from the soul's side, from the side of duty and grace manifested in faithfulness unto death. And it is this latter view which Christ is taking. He speaks the

language of commandment. And it becomes us to cling to Him, as if there were the most incessant danger of our falling away. We shall make heaven certain, and faith shall rise into full assurance, not by looking back on any past experience, but by holding Christ as firmly every moment as if we were every moment hanging over the pit of hell. The perseverance of the saints is not a doctrine only, but a duty too. It ought to breed no negligence, no unwary walking, no heedless straying from the Shepherd and the fold. Where these are, the perseverance of the saints is not,—say what you will. There is deadly peril, there is impending ruin. Oh! hear the voice of the True Vine, in whom the full stream of life is flowing for your thirsty soul, apart from whom you can only wither and die: 'Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.'

Here, then, having laid down His principle, having made union to Him the test of life and fruitfulness, the Lord stands at this point of divergence, and runs His eye down, and points His finger along, the two grand paths which men take—paths which never meet, but go for ever farther and farther asunder; the path of life and the path of death: one heavenwards, the other hellwards; at the end of the one the

paradise of God, where the Vine and its branches grow in their perfected beauty: at the end of the other the everlasting burnings—(verses 5, 6:) 'I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.' That is the one picture, and this the other: 'If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.'

Fruit or *Fuel!* There is the dread alternative. Which is your case, my friend?

1. *The Branches which are for Fruit.*—Where shall we look for them? How discern them? See, they 'abide in' the Vine. Firmly do they cling to it with all their fibres. Deeply do they drink of its sap and life. You cannot tear them away without tearing the Vine itself to pieces. Without them it would not be itself, it would not be the same. As well sever the living limb from the living body: you leave it gashed and pained and bleeding. And so, without a figure, they are souls that live by the faith of the Son of God, souls in which the Holy Spirit dwells. Satan tries his hand at wrenching them away from Christ, but he comes poor speed; the winds, storms, and tempests of the world but root them more firmly in their Saviour, Jesus; they abide in Christ because He abides in them. In hea-

venly looms the cords that bind them to Christ were woven; in the furnace-fire of God's redeeming love were the fetters forged by which they are sweetly clasped to Him, to be separated from Him no more. By grace is the union constituted. By grace is its continuance guaranteed. Not the faithfulness of man is here, but the faithfulness of God. Take, O Grace, the crown and wear it: it is thine!

The Lord himself puts that plainly in the end of the 5th verse: 'Without me ye can do nothing' —nothing, absolutely nothing; nothing to satisfy God's justice; nothing to please God; nothing to keep yourselves from sin; nothing to escape hell and win heaven; nothing in the way of fruit; not the smallest, hardest, meanest grape will grow without Christ. Here is the grand doctrine which all the dealings of God with His people are constantly preaching. It takes a deal of preaching,—the preaching not of pulpits only, but of backslidings and falls, sorrows and losses, sickbeds and deathbeds, to impress on us that most certain truth, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' Got you ever a victory over temptation? Were you able to stand in the evil day? Had you patience under wrong-doing, under suffering that was hard to bear? Have you borne any fruit of truth and justice and loving-kindness and self-sacrifice? Ah! then, it is all of Christ,—

working for you, in you, by you. But for Him my portion were with devils; and not my portion only, but my character and nature were like theirs. To Him be all the praise! 'Without me ye can do nothing.' It is an unblessed ministry which is not full of Christ; and the life, however fair it seem, of which He is not the beginning and middle and end, is utterly misguided and gone astray, is a wandering star for which is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

Are you, dear friend, a fruit-bearing branch? To be Christ-like is to bear fruit. To confess Him before men; to obey His will in all things, whatever it cost you; to suffer for His sake if need be; to speak of His love and what He has done for you; to adorn His doctrine with a holy life; to reflect His meekness and gentleness; so to live that those around you shall be better and happier for your neighbourhood; to be mindful always of death; ready always, in the confidence of the Saviour's righteousness, for judgment; that is to bear fruit,—fruit in which God will take delight, such as it is even here, and fruit with whose riper and richer cluster He will adorn at length His upper garden, His paradise on high.

2. *The Branches which are for fuel.*—The story of the unworthy branches is an awful one. Mark four steps or stages in it (ver. 6): *First*, they are withered; *second*, they are cast out; *third*, they

are gathered into bundles and flung into the fire; and *fourth*, they are consumed to ashes. Withered because they had no vital connexion with the vine, no access to its life, only a look of greenness and promise which for lack of nourishment must soon pass away. Cast out because withered, that they may not deform the fair vineyard with their dead unsightliness, their portion with the rubbish and the weeds, not with fruit and flower; nay, more, not to be borne with even where they lie cumbering the ground a worthless heap, but gathered carefully as every rag of an infected garment ought to be gathered, and cast upon the fire; and there, as it blazes up and crackles fiercely, turning the withered branches into smoke and flame,—at work not in the green tree but in the dry, reduced at last to ashes, the false luxuriance of twig and leaf vanished all into white wind-blown dust when the work of the fire is done.

Must we say all this of souls? Alas! the woful picture in every line of it is all too true. The doom of the fruitless branch faintly rehearses the doom of the fruitless soul. Withered into eternal death, cast out into utter darkness,—the worm that dieth not, the fire that is not quenched. In Christ is salvation; out of Christ is ruin, utter and irretrievable. The righteousness of God kindles that fire and keeps it burning. His holy

angels are the reapers in the last harvest, and make up the bundles—the wheat for the garner, the tares for the flames. Oh! who shall betide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth, for He is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. His fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner, but the chaff shall He burn up with unquenchable fire. Who will dwell with this devouring fire? Who will lie down in these everlasting burnings?

Look how the flame crackles among that heap of withered wood and leaves. How it snaps asunder the strongest; how it licks up the least with its fiery tongue. What a power of destruction it has! How relentless, ceaseless, insatiable, till nothing be left for it to devour. Beside a burning, you seem to be looking on at the fierce joys of a beast of prey as it tortures its victims, and tears them limb from limb, and crunches the bones and flesh, and drinks thirstily the reeking blood. This awful similitude of fire, then, is that which Holy Scripture, which the Lord Jesus Himself above all, employs to set forth the utter ruin of those who are cast forth as a branch and are withered. Only their burning does not cease, but the smoke of it ascendeth up for ever. Oh! my friends, whatever that fire may be, surely the warning is distinct and terrible. Will you brave

it? Will you perish in the face of offered mercy? Think who gives you this warning, the Lord Jesus, and what testimony He supplies of His own faith in it, of His own sense of its terribleness, by dying the death of the Cross that there might be a way of escape for you. Look at Him, with uplifted finger of warning, and yet with such pleading eyes of love, and oh! say Him not nay. Come in, come in, to cleave to Him, and to live with His life for ever.

God forbid that among us should be those fruitful-seeming branches, those name-to-live Christians whom the Husbandman will find out and take away at the last. Make sure of your interest in Christ. Be in earnest about this matter of your religious life, as God is in earnest, as Christ is in earnest, as death and judgment and eternity are in earnest. And oh! my brethren, who have some little life and fruit, remember the condition of these—without which they cannot be—that you abide in Christ and He in you.

VIII.

NATURAL LAW AND DIVINE DISCIPLINE.

'He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder.'—JOB xxviii. 26.

WHEN one takes a text from the Book of Job it is always necessary to remember, that the author of that book teaches in the dramatic form; that is, puts in the mouths of his characters different, and sometimes conflicting, opinions, which cannot all be true, or at least equally true; and therefore the remarks which they make, unless in the case of the Divine speaker at the close of the book, are not to be taken for granted, but are to be compared with the other Scriptures, and justified or condemned accordingly. In the case of this text, however, we are safe enough. The sovereignty of God in nature, which is its theme, is a foundation-thought in Scripture. The cases are too many to quote, in which all things whatever in material nature, among the lower animals, in our human world, and up to the highest reach of

angelic dignity, are declared to be caused, carried on, controlled by God.

The sacred writings, in which this perception of God in nature, and this homage to Him as God of creation and providence, are especially to be found, are those which mainly belong to the period of David and Solomon, the Augustan age of Hebrew thought, of Hebrew science, art, and literature—the Psalms, for example, the Proverbs, and this Book of Job—most probably penned in that highly cultured and speculative age, though its scene is manifestly laid far out in the eastern desert, and far back in the simple days of the patriarchs. I fear we must remark a painful contrast, where there is also much resemblance, between that age and our own. Hebrew speculation, bold enough, was reverent always; Hebrew science, in King Solomon, for example, bowed itself at the feet of God, and held itself limited and transcended by the great mysteries of His being and government.

I have chosen this text out of hundreds much to the same purpose, because it gives a deliverance, from the point of view of Scripture and of a pious spirit, on two great subjects of modern scientific inquiry. The laws and conditions of the atmosphere which enfolds our world, on which so much, so very much depends in the matter of health and sickness, of barrenness and fertility, of

seasons bad and good, are at present the subject of very promising research. Here the solution of many important questions, bearing on the health and wealth of communities, may be expected to be found. Again, important steps are being taken in the way of reducing the various forces which operate in nature—maintaining its uniformity or effecting its changes, holding our bodies together, and the firm earth we stand on, and making the stars remain in their places; or which operate in the up-growth and blossoming of flowers, in the shapes of the mountains, in the course of the rivers, in the ebb and flow, and in the calms and tempests, of the sea—reducing these to one grand force or energy developing itself in these manifold ways. And this is being done by means of inquiries into the nature of heat, into the nature of electrical action, which tread close on the mystery of life itself—physical life I mean; and we know not what strange discoveries in this region may wait on patient investigation. Such researches are laudable, are a duty indeed, and may result in many very practical benefits, as like researches have done before. By all means let the atmosphere be questioned till the record which is written on its pages can be plainly read; by all means let the thunderbolt of heaven, which man has made already to run his errands over land, broad continents, and through the

deepest seas, be forced to give up all its secrets; but, come what may, the final answer and the deepest truth will be found in that old belief by which these and all nature whatsoever are chained to the throne of God. 'He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder.' It is very important, that in all days whatever, and especially in scientific days like these, we should be very determined to connect all things—in nature, in human history, and in that play of thought, emotion, motive, will, which makes up our own life—with God, an Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent God. In His being and attributes the problem of the universe has its final solution; and, at any rate, the health and peace of our own souls will be nursed by a loving recognition of Him,—His power, and wisdom, and love, in all things. Such a belief will never cross the path of true science, will never stifle one honest inquiry. For this truth encloses all, and lies beneath all. Science but inquires into the manner of God's working. Whatever the manner of it turn out to be, the fact of it will remain as before. To this fact the study of nature can supply no contradiction without wandering from its province, and adopting a conclusion which the premises can never justify; while, to this fact, it may and does supply confirmation in abundance, the order and beauty of the world being such as

we should expect when the course is shaped, and the helm is held, and the raging of the sea is ruled by the Lord of Hosts.

1. Let us try then to take in this great truth of the Divine Providence. Let us sit under its awful but most pleasant shadow awhile.

'God's works of providence,' says the Catechism, 'are His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing *all his creatures and all their actions.*' I thank the catechism for that very sweeping statement: the more sweeping it can be made it will be nearer the Scripture and nearer the truth. It means even this, that every particle of matter, and every movement of mind, every event or change, even the least, every pulsation of life through all the wide creation, from the beginning to the end, has God for its great first cause,—is made what it is and kept what it is,—is determined and effected at every moment by God.

Let me illustrate this. Take first the matter of which the earth itself is made,—inorganic, dead; the air that folds around the world, and works into its remotest corners; the waters that flow in riot channels or sleep in lake-beds, or rise and fall in the tides of the great deep; the layer or layers of rock which are the stony pavement of the great nature-temple. Of these, the past history and present state have been made what they are by

God; every grain of sand that is woven into the yellow fringe of ocean, every drop of water in its seemingly aimless career, in steady stream or heaving wave, or snow-white foam-flake, every atom that makes up the viewless atmosphere, is watched by the eyes and shaped by the hand, and controlled by the will of God. The only dispute can be about the method which He takes in making period pass into period, and carrying this dead material nature on from change to change, whether by slow developments or quick transitions. That He does it, and He only, is infallibly sure.

Take, secondly, the world of physical life, in the herb of the field, in the fish of the sea, in reptile, bird, and beast, and then in man, taking him for the present simply as a living creature of the highest order among other creatures also endowed with life. Here then is freedom and variety, an inward mysterious force which we call life, determining the form and bringing about the changes, and yet all according to a divine order, and to unchanging and more or less discoverable laws. That order, and these laws, are no separate beings independent of God, apart from God; they are the consistent expressions of His wise and holy will. The ravens are fed by him, and the young lions when they roar. He traces the course of the merest insect in the summer air,

of the tiniest swimmer in the pathless sea. The spring-time greenness and the summer luxuriance, the brown leaves of autumn and the leafless boughs of winter, are of Him who bids the sap climb to the farthest twig, and recede again, who gives or withholds His sunshine and His rains. And those bodies of ours, so beautifully and wonderfully made, with all their play of nerve and muscle, of heart and brain at every instant, are carried on in their wondrous complication but most exquisite harmony, by God.

> 'Strange that a harp of thousand strings
> Should keep in tune so long!'

—strange, but only as all the doings of the Almighty hand that sweeps those strings, and calls forth the mysterious melody of life, are strange.

Take, thirdly, the unseen domain of mind and spirit, of thought, affection, will, in God's human creatures, and here, too, quite as much as in the other cases, He is supreme, and all things that fall out are the fulfilment of His grand providential scheme. I know I may be met by serious objections here. If God is thus author, it may be said, of every thought and wish, and act of will, there is an end of all free agency, and, therefore, of all moral responsibility in man. The objection admits of no speculative reply, but, what is better, it can be met by a very practical

one. The freedom of man's will, and yet also the derivation of it from God and determination of it by God at every moment, are two facts which the mental philosopher will find to be equally undeniable, and, however theoretically irreconcilable, to be in every man's mind and mental history actually reconciled. *Again*, if every deed that man can will and do has God for its author, it may be said, that this is to make God answerable for the evil as for the good in any man, to bring God in guilty of human sin. To which objection there is this answer, that God is proved to be the author of every human action; that God is proved not to be the author of any sin; therefore, however difficult it be for our minds to conceive it, while God is the author of the action, man must be the author of its sinful character; the stream entered at the one end pure, which emerged at the other polluted by the human channel through which it flowed. It is most true, that every thought you think, and deed you do, good or bad, every prayer you offer, and effort you put forth, belongs to a providential order, and is under a divine control. The phenomena of mind and soul, as well as of organic and inorganic material nature, obey a system of unchanging law, which is the expression hour by hour, as well as age by age, of the will of God. It is as much a part of the great truth of God's

providence, that 'the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; and that He turneth it whithersoever He will,' as it is that 'He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder.'

2. In this scheme of divine providence, one and all its parts are related to each other. The stormy wind fulfils God's word. No tempest bursts upon the world; no tree is blasted or human life is withered up by an electric flash; no plague breaks out in any city; death knocks at no door of rich man or poor man; no blight falls on the corn-field or the fruit-trees; no stream dries up in its channel, or sweeps adown it with desolating violence, unless at God's immediate bidding. War, pestilence, and famine, traceable all to what we might call their causes, in our limited knowledge, are let loose for their work of devastation in every case by Him. But then, what reason have we to connect these with human ill-doing? what reason have we to believe that there is any connexion between moral offences and natural calamities? This reason, namely: that the scheme of providence is *one*, and not to be arbitrarily separated into parts, and intersected by impassable boundary-lines. The King of the natural is King also, as we have seen, of the mental and moral world. They are interwoven in His administration. He takes them all in with

one wide glance of His eye. What hinders this; nay, how can it but be that He will make the less the servant of the greater? He will fight against wrong-doing even with physical weapons. He will make even the dead earth with many voices proclaim His love of righteousness and hatred of sin. It is evident at once, that when the scheme is one, and the helm is in one hand, all things must work together. Material nature cannot go its own way, and moral nature its own, as some have dreamed. They cross each other at many points; they speak one language; they are the servants of one Lord. The sinner is at war, not with his conscience only, nor with the moral law that binds him only, but with God's holy order in every part of it, with every creature of God which has not sinned. It is due to a wise and tender forbearance that his crop comes to its harvest, and his trees bear their fruit, that his heart goes on beating, and his brain still works; that God's lightning does not blast him where he stands in his God-defying iniquity. What wonder if, amidst God's strange long-suffering, it should be proclaimed sometimes in a voice of thunder, that at once and always the wages of sin is death!

3. The theory of divine providence, which holds that physical calamities result only from physical and never from moral causes, that they

can never be judgments for sin, in the proper sense of the word, is false and unscriptural.

For this is to divide the one scheme by which God manifests His glory, into two parts, entirely marked off from each other. It is to make a complete divorce between His government in material nature and His government in man and in human history. The theory to which I refer, and which is sure to be propounded by somebody whenever the people of God see His hand in judgment, and prepare to humble themselves, is this, that ill-doing in the natural domain, that is, inattention to natural laws, will be punished simply by natural calamity, and well-doing in the same way crowned with natural blessings; while ill-doing in the moral and spiritual domain will bring only moral and spiritual punishment, such as remorse, or a hardened heart, and so on, and well-doing in the same, such as prayer and holy living, will meet with moral and spiritual reward. That is, in the practical result, that God will not punish your iniquity with temporal calamity on the one hand; neither will your uprightness of life, nor your supplications, draw from Him any temporal blessings on the other. Or, as it has been put a little offensively: Be as wicked as you please, but farm well, and your barns will be filled with plenty—Be as good as you please, but farm ill, and your labour will earn a wretched return, or none at all.

Now there is in all this enough of truth to make it plausible, but the theory is vitiated by a deadly error. It *is* true that physical well-doing or ill-doing, attention to natural laws or neglect of them, is appropriately, and by a divine order, rewarded or punished with prosperity or the reverse; and it *is* true that prayer and holy living, or the opposite of these, will bring about unfailingly the abundance or the lack of spiritual good. But that is not all the truth. Because God's kingdom in nature and grace is one,—one in its pervading spirit, and one in its end and aim; the physical and the spiritual will be found intertwined. Calamity will wait on godlessness, and the Hand that moves the world will itself be moved by prayer. No appeal need be made to Scripture in support of this. The statements of the Bible mean nothing if they do not mean this. But I appeal fearlessly to human history on the great scale and the small, the history of nations and of men, to testify that moral causes have ever produced tremendous natural effects; that the fear of God has earned prosperity in the highest sense, and the neglect of God, or rebellion against Him, has wrought bitter shame and deadly loss.

But stay a little, you may say. Do not the wicked prosper, often live and die without a shadow on the sunshine of their prosperity, and

the righteous suffer and fail, and walk beneath a cloud? Certainly. But this fact, if you look at it, is no objection to my argument, but rather helps it out. The position I have taken up is this, that God's scheme of providence is one, and that a state of mind or way of life may be, and often is, affected by divine dealings of a natural and external kind. The physical is servant to the moral and the spiritual. May it not be so; nay, is it not manifestly so, when storms break on the heads of God's people as a trial of faith, as a loving discipline,—ay, and when the wicked flourishes, spreads like a green bay-tree, that his plenty and peace may harden his heart, and he may be destroyed for ever? Job sat in sackcloth, and scraped himself with a potsherd; and haughty Babylon lived luxuriously, and said, 'I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.' Yes; but let me suffer with Job, rather than rejoice with Babylon. The Bible and the world are full of the divine paradox, that calamity is often highest blessedness, and prosperity is simple death and ruin. Why, so far from there being any severance between the moral and the natural, all this nature is but working out the highest moral ends. This green earth and these star-bespangled heavens are the floor and roof of a mighty theatre for the manifestation of God's moral attributes, of His holiness,

love, and truth. A Father, Saviour, Friend is He who 'made a decree for the rain and a way for the lightning of the thunder.'

The question of miracles has not been raised at all in this discussion. We have found in the very idea of God's ordinary providence room enough for the relation between human sin and natural calamities. The view we have taken of this matter leads, I think, to the practical conclusion that there are two weapons, or sets of weapons, with which to arm ourselves against such visitations as that plague of cholera at present hovering over us, as if uncertain where to make its descent upon its prey. The first is natural, and the second moral; the first is pains, and the second prayer; the first is vigorous endeavour, and the second humility and patience.

First, Let every inquiry be made into the natural conditions of such a plague as this, and every precaution taken against their occurrence. Cholera is the scourge of the intemperate,—cholera is the scourge of the unclean. It breeds amidst foul air, and in distempered bodies. These are most distinctly its quarry; but even where air is purest, and the conditions of life are healthiest, it avenges the neglect which has suffered poverty and vice to rot and steam in the midst of selfish opulence, for when the death-angel comes, the shadow of his wings is broad, and the sweep of

his sword is far. The gospel of sobriety, and not less what one has called the gospel of soap and water, are preached by the cholera with a trumpet-voice. Better and cleaner dwellings,—broader streets and lanes,—fewer dram-shops and more libraries and reading-rooms and public parks, are part at least of its cure. And thus it preaches of a human brotherhood, which men are apt to forget. I *am* my brother's keeper. If I do not seek to make my poor brother live with me, he may make me die with him.

Second, Let there be deep humiliation for individual and national sin, and earnest prayer to the loving and long-suffering God. He can withdraw his judgments. Who dares say that the cholera must rage whether He will or no? There is no such horrid fatalism in the universe of a gracious God. Look at that point where these railways meet, where the streams of iron rails converge, and watch that man who, with firm hand and steady eye, awaits these trains which, one behind the other, come thundering on. He pulls the handle which he holds, and one sweeps past away to the north-eastward. He moves it again, and the next sweeps past off into the south-west, and in a few minutes, instead of following the same track, as they did at first, they are miles asunder. Even so in the onward rush of natural changes, one little change obeying, so to speak, a turn of God's

hand, may settle whether the tide of agencies is to set towards life or death, peace and plenty, or wide-spread destruction. And a nation's, or a church's, or a single believer's prayer, itself foreseen by Him from eternity, and forming one link and that the mightiest in the chain of agencies, may determine the turn He will give His hand, the set of the resistless tide. Let the Bible tell, —let the history of the whole world tell,—let your own experience tell how prayer prevails with Him who 'made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder.'

IX.

MEMBERS OF CHRIST.

'We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.'
EPH. v. 30.

THE language of the text is peculiar, so exceedingly strong, that at first it almost offends us. And yet, when the purpose of it is to bring out more intensely the sweet reality of a believer's union to Christ, we ought to be glad of it, and to take it at its fullest strength. It is to be accounted for by the context. The Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Paul, is making the union of two persons, husband and wife in marriage, a parable of the mystical union between the soul and its Saviour. An old thought this, in the Scriptures, coming up again and again in the prophecies especially. God is ever the Husband, and His Israel the wife—alas! too often unfaithful. 'Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy

land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.'

For the especial drift of the words before us, we must think of the first union consummated by God himself. 'The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.' That is the reference in the text, the source from which its peculiar phraseology is drawn. As the first Adam said concerning the help-meet whom God had found for him, so the Second Adam says concerning his bride the Church, She is a member of my body, of my flesh, and of my bones.

The singular deep-reaching, ever-enduring union of Christ with His people is thus set forth, set forth as comprehending not one department of human nature, but human nature altogether, from what is least in it to what is greatest, from the point at which it touches the earth to the point at which it is most like, most near to God in heaven,—body, soul, and spirit. 'We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.'

The union implies that we are—

1. Body of His Body. 2. Soul of His Soul. 3. Spirit of His Spirit.

1. *Body of His Body.*—The word 'body' in the text is not to be taken as merely tantamount to the expressions which follow,—'his flesh, and his bones.' It is his mystical body which is meant, that is, the whole company of His redeemed, the whole Church of God, which has its life in Him. And the real nature of the union is brought out in the rest of the verse,—its being a union of what we mean by body, as well as of soul and spirit: 'We are members of his body, being even of his flesh, and of his bones.'

In two ways, from two sides, may we contemplate the union between Christ and ourselves as body of His body, flesh of His flesh, bone of His bones—(1.) from His side of the matter; and (2.) from our own.

(1.) *From His side.*—He is one of us. To lift us up to Him, He came down to us. To make us flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bones, He became flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bones. His humanity was certainly no shadow or phantom, no abnormal—in the sense of imperfect, incomplete—humanity. 'Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same.' His body was

of the substance of the Virgin-mother, though prepared for Him by God. He could smile and weep; He hungered and thirsted; He was capable of pleasure and pain; He was born and He died, even as we. His history is not the relation of a dream or parable; it bears in every line of it marks that it is the history of a living man. Beside the manger of Bethlehem, where the happy mother bends over her babe; in the temple, amidst the astonished Rabbis; at the marriage in Cana of Galilee; under the hot eastern sun at the well of Jacob; in the little storm-tossed craft on the sea of Gennesaret, when the Redeemer sleeps; amidst the weeping company at the grave of Lazarus His friend; most of all when His own grave is ready for Him, when the tremor of His agony is come upon Him, when the death-dews start upon His brow, when the blood and water flow from His side,—behold Him, and say whether, whatever else He be, He be not very man, 'flesh of your flesh, and bone of your bones.'

This is all true, but it needs something to be added. The text asserts a present union to Christ, a thing that is even now. And so a proof, ever so satisfactory, of His true humanity when He was on earth, is not enough. It still leaves the question to be asked, Is He human now? He lived, you say, and died, and vanished from the world. What assurance have we that He is

human now, that He is as truly human at least as He was, that His humanity is not a mere dream of the former age, or a thing which was perhaps, but after a time ceased to be? Well, there is the undeniable truth of His resurrection; there are the forty days of His resurrection-life spent on earth, that men might know that He was risen indeed, and risen as He died, God-man. We know, too, how careful He was to convince His disciples of His humanity after His resurrection, as well as before His death. In doubting Thomas all the scepticism possible to an anxious seeking soul in regard to this matter uttered itself, and in him also it was set at rest for ever. 'Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet.' In the act of benediction, with His outspread hands, and tender, solemn voice, and gracious smile, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight, and so their eyes followed Him to the very gate of heaven, to be seen no more by His Church on

earth, but to be loved unseen till the second coming. We know that within these golden walls and pearly gates, and on the right hand of the Majesty on high, He remains the same,—His locks bushy and black as a raven, His eye undimmed by age, but His heart beating as of yore in its tender humanness, His old experiences remembered still, his old sympathies alive still, no break whatever in the continuity of His human being any more than of His Divine : 'Flesh still of our flesh, and bone of our bones.'

(2.) *From our side.*—This view is in truth but a result of what has been already said; but it seems more marvellous, less believable. 'We are flesh of his flesh, bone of his bones,'—in body one with Him. The true marvel is that He, the Son of God, took on Him our nature, became a kinsman-Redeemer. When He did so, it followed *of course* that we, if we be believers, have become Immanuel's kinsfolk, yea, members of Christ, of His very body. Our part in the matter has certainly not been an active one. Of His own free grace He hath constituted a relationship the grandeur and sweetness of which fills us with wonder and awe. It is the union of members of a family, as Christ said, looking about on His disciples, 'Behold my mother and my brethren! for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister,

and mother.' Nay, more, it is the union even of the limbs and members to the head to which they are subject. 'Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?' or that every degradation done to them is done to Him, for we are 'members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.'

Yes, dear friend, your often feeble, often weary, often aching body, your body that shall die, and be laid in the grave, and crumble into dust, is akin to the body of Him who died and rose again. It is a part of Him, one might say, and so is to be used as not ours but His; to be honoured, even cherished, in all grace and seemliness, for His sake; and in all its peculiar weaknesses and sufferings, even those that we feel ashamed of and endeavour to treat as trifles, it affects Him, and is cared for by him, just as your eye with the mote in it, or your bleeding finger, affects you, and is cared for by you. You see at once how this, if we remembered it, would not only alleviate our sufferings, but sanctify and elevate our enjoyments. For every sense God has provided in this world a feast of sinless pleasures; and in the enjoyment of these, as when we drink thirstily the sweet west winds, or breathe the fragrance of the flowers, or satisfy our eyes with gazing over lovely lands or gleaming seas, the Lord Jesus has a fellow-feeling with us; yea, rejoices in

our joy. And you see, also, how this takes the sting from death, and necessitates, in fact, the resurrection. The poor emaciated dying body of that child of God is a member of Christ, and He suffers in its suffering, when the eye grows glazed and dim, and the hands stiffen, and the chill creeps backward to the heart; and wherever the dust of His people lies, in green graveyard or nameless mound on the battle-field, or amidst the sands of the desert, or in the depths of the sea, He has a treasure hidden away to be recovered again; seed sown which shall spring at length to the varied beauty of gardens, to the yellow glory of harvest-fields. And as the scattered dust of each child of God shall be gathered together in the resurrection, to form anew the body, fashioned now after the likeness of Christ's glorious body, even so shall the members of Christ himself be gathered together, that He may be complete, in the completeness of His Church, when He doth present her to Himself without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, holy and without blemish. For we are 'members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.'

2. *Soul of His Soul.*—I have dwelt at greatest length on the first head of discourse, because it is the lesson directly conveyed by the text, and because it is the extreme case, and contains the

rest within it. The humanity of the Lord Jesus, being a true humanity, was made up of a true body and a reasonable soul, a soul human as the body, a soul with powers of thought and affection and will like yours and mine, but with this grand difference, that it was without sin. More briefly, we shall follow the same plan as before. We shall look at the union from Christ's side first, and then from our own.

(1.) *From Christ's side.*—How sweetly, through all His early history, speaks out the voice of a true, tender soul; with what reaches of thought, with what holy calm of resolution come to after inward strife, with what depth and glow of love! Pleasant to Him were the faces of his friends; and the reproaches of His enemies cut deep. Pleasant to Him was the companionship of those He loved; and bitter, bitter was the loneliness in which, after all, He had to dwell. See in the garden of Gethsemane, His human heart utter itself, not only in the cry to His Father, 'If it be possible,' but also in the pathetic appeal to the disciples, 'What, could ye not watch with me one hour?' Here also is He indeed one of us, and in heaven He keepeth still the same human heart, filled with the blessedness of His holy immortal union to God, and yet scarred deeply, as it were, with the traces of former suffering; and so quick with sympathy, gushing with ten-

derness, rich in thoughts of gracious help; for in that He hath suffered, being tempted, He is able also to succour those that are tempted. 'We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.'

(2.) *From our side.*—Thus, as before, it comes that our hearts are knit to Christ's heart, if we be His; not simply and only as they may be knit to the heart of God, being made in His image at the first, but as they are knit to the heart of our best-beloved on earth, whose souls are, so to speak, parts of our own. Yea, no two wedded hearts in the world are so akin, so at one in all their movements, least and greatest, as the hearts of Christ and His people are. It is but one great heart beating on, and sending through all the mystic body its living pulsations. We love as Christ loves, and hate as He hates; yea, love with His own holy love, and hate with His own holy hatred. And think, too, of being gathered into the brightness of His Divine wisdom, so that we see with His eyes, and in His light are blind no more; of being permitted to fill up what is behind of His sufferings, so helping Him to bear His cross; and of sharing his endless joy, receiving it always as the spring flows on, filling every vessel you bring to it with its crystal waters, and yet itself full and flowing still, as if no vessel had ever been set there. Oh to realize,

to feel this oneness of soul with Christ! Oh to rise with Him to His bright and everlasting throne, and so to look over the mists and turmoils of the world far above them all! Oh to lose my little heart in the infinite greatness of His; my life, which is a span, in His measureless eternity; my dim thoughts, and cold affections, and wavering will in the perfect clearness and unfathomable love, and holy, changeless strength and peace wherein He dwells! 'We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.'

3. *Spirit of His Spirit.*—This is the secret of all. Here the foundation of the new life is laid: all else is superstructure. Here its seed is sown: all else is its natural upgrowth and evolution. A living creature begins to be at its birth, at the mysterious springing up within it at least of the principle of life. And the new man is born when the Holy Spirit is given—the very Spirit of Christ. Then the new life begins, and not till then. 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' And the new life itself is so truly of the Holy Ghost, created by Him, maintained by His indwelling continually, that the Bible has but one name for both, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' And so the spirit of a redeemed and renewed man, the holy, heavenward principle which has

been implanted in him, lives not at all apart from Christ, is the link of a vital inseparable union to Christ. In that spirit He dwells. It hungers after Him, and is refreshed with His presence. He can speak to it without voice and without words, though He does speak to it also by voice and words. His will is its will also; it is entirely at one with Him. And that is why it is said, that whatsoever is born of God doth not commit sin. The man is not sinless—nay, nay—but his new heart is; his spirit, which is the seed of a divine life in him, is of Christ, and so lusteth against the flesh continually, and is holy as Christ himself is holy. Oh what a deep sweet mystery is this! that in me, if I will, God may dwell; the Lord Jesus, my blessed Redeemer, may dwell, and make my poor life a reflection of His own. The light which streams from the one great luminary in heaven goes on many errands, the same light all the while. It kindles the face of the calm ocean into glory; brings out the varied hues of the landscape, its green and grey, and purple and gold; it sets the gilding of noble halls and the glory of beautiful gardens all a-glow; it shines into the poor man's cot through its low window; colours the pale flowers which are nurtured in the great city where it scarce can penetrate; lightens the sick-chamber with a tender gleam. Even so the

Spirit, which is Christ's alone, taketh His way, blessed be God, into many hearts, quickening, renewing, sanctifying, and gathers them all into one great brotherhood; yea, into the unity of one life, which is the same in all, the life of the Risen Saviour.

My Christian friends, I have spoken of things you know already, will know better by-and-bye. Oh drink deep of this life! pray for a nearer realization of this union to Jesus, which is your eternal joy. And if I speak to those to whom it is all an enigma, I have but to say, It is free to you, yes! to you. The river of the water of life from the throne of God and of the Lamb flows at your feet. You have been near its ripple and rush to-day. Oh stop and drink! and ye too shall be members of Christ's body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

X.

FALLING ASLEEP.

'And when he had said this, he fell asleep.'—ACTS vii. 60.

THE Bible does not deal much in deathbed scenes. There are a few such in it, but only a few. There are two deaths or dyings in the New Testament at which we are permitted to draw near and look,—to the solemn voices of which we are suffered to listen. But they are deaths without deathbeds,—destitute of those poor alleviations which human nature craves for, the friendly tearful faces all around, the friendly hands to close the eyes which are fixed and sightless for ever; and yet, amidst numberless circumstances of pain, and horror, and shame, and loneliness, they maintain a singular calm wherein death is swallowed up of victory. We are witnesses to the one when we stand by the Cross of the Redeemer. We are witnesses to the other outside the gate, where 'they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'

There was something of course in the Master's dying to which we cannot hope to attain. Not so in the disciple's. This very extreme case,—extreme, I mean, in respect of the outward manner of it,—is, I believe, recorded for us, that we may see how triumphant, how unutterably calm, beyond all power of men or devils to disturb its calmness, a Christian's death may be. Was there not everything there to make death dreadful in the last degree? It was sudden death, rushing on him wildly, swiftly, without those long preparations which are often vouchsafed, wherein the last enemy disappears in the best friend, and the coming of death gets to be the coming of Jesus. It was death in the midst of life and strength; not the easy extinguishing of a lamp which had burnt low in the socket, but the destruction of a life which had to be torn, and crushed, and trampled out before it could die. It was death under the bitterest sense of wrong, and at the hand of godless violence,—death nowise brightened by the solicitude of kinsfolk and friends keeping the departing spirit company, even to the brink of the river, but death twice shadowed by utter forsakenness, by the horrid presence of cruel faces, and gnashing teeth, and bloody hands. Surely, then, the story comes to a most strange and unexpected close. What can be the meaning of this soft music to which the curtain falls on that

frightful scene? 'And when he had said this, he fell asleep.'

There are two things to which the brief text which I have chosen invites our thoughts, and these, when we think of them a little, will give us a very complete view of a Christian's death.

I. Stephen's last words,—what they were. 'And when he had said this.'

II. His Death,—what it was. 'He fell asleep.'

I. His last words,—what they were. 'And when he had said this.'

No doubt reference is here made, strictly and properly, only to the Christ-like prayer for his murderers, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;' but I shall not miss the spirit of the passage, if I include also the prayer to the Saviour which precedes, and so speak of the light cast on Stephen's state of mind by these his last two words, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,' and 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' It cannot fail to strike you that they wonderfully resemble the last petitions of the Lord Jesus Himself, with such differences as there must be when in the one case a mere disciple, and in the other the Eternal Son of the Father, prayed. 'And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the

other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' And again, 'When Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said this, he gave up the ghost.'

Let us observe these two things then:—*First*, the hope which he had in his death; and *second*, his solicitude even about his murderers.

1. *The hope he had in his death.*—'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' I am reminded how the same thing in substance, and almost in words, had been said by holy David amidst the shadows of the Old Testament time, 'Into thine hands I commit my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.' No doubt this was a certain prophetic anticipation of the dying words of the Redeemer Himself. At any rate, that saying of David passed through *his*—'Father, into thy hands,' to Stephen's fuller assurance of faith, and fuller understanding of the gracious relationship between man and God,—'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'

I could spend many words in showing you what a great hope this was. There is something very painful, very mysterious to us, in the severance of the body and the spirit. It means that the I, the *me*, my very self, must go forth from accustomed scenes and circumstances,—whither, I

cannot now know. The nature of that state or world into which my departing soul must pass is not revealed. What comes after death,—what new sights meet my eye; what new sounds fill my ear, I cannot guess. My spirit, my darling, my very self,—where shall my head be laid? what is it that awaits me when I have gone that longest, loneliest, sorrowfullest journey? Oh, it is so dark: it is so cold! If somebody could but go with me! If I had not to go forth into the night alone,—behind me the dwelling I left with its mid-day light and its inmates, who can come no farther than the doors with me,—before me the awful shadows of the grave!

And that is not all, for there is a sense of sin to plant thorns in my pillow; and there are awful realities of judgment, of vengeance ready to burst on me, to make death yet more than death. To die may be to be lost for ever; to bid adieu to everything peaceful and blessed; and to drink to the dregs the cup of God's wrath and curse. There are shapes of horror, fiends from the nether darkness, that gather about dying-beds to drag the sinner down to share their woe: 'Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.' Oh, who will care for my spirit when it flutters forth like a frightened bird—homeless, forlorn?

See now the sweetness of this last word of

Stephen's, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' See the blessedness of Christian hope. It fills the gloomy portals, the whole dim land, with one form and face—the form and face of Jesus. The coming of death is the coming of Jesus. And the departing spirit is not sent out like Hagar into the wilderness, but is yielded up to Jesus. The light of your earthly life fades out in the light of His face, as the light of stars fades out in the light of the sun. They think you blind when you have only begun to see. They think you sunken and helpless, when you are borne as on eagle's wings. They think you dead when you have only begun to live. It is Jesus in whom the infinite glory of Jehovah is softened, tempered for trembling human souls, without ceasing to be infinite, divine. It is Jesus, with the mark of the thorns on His brow, and the wounds in His hands and feet, come to claim what He purchased with His pain. It is Jesus who went through death in its very deathliest gloom,—Jesus, experienced, sympathetic as well as kind. It is the resurrection and the life—before whom the grave of Lazarus loosed its bands and opened its doors —in whom death is now swallowed up in victory. Oh! I would not think of death then as going out, but as coming in; as passing away, but as hastening home; as being unclothed, but as being clothed upon; as the twilight of the evening, but

as the twilight of the dawn. 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' 'And when he had said this, he fell asleep.'

2. *His solicitude even about his murderers.*—'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' Sweet echo from the heart of a mere man of that divine 'Father, forgive them!' The difference is not in the spirit from which came both these dying words, but in the mere solicitude and humble petitioning of Stephen, as compared with the authoritative mediatorial prayer of Christ.

This spirit—shining so brightly in the Master and reflected in the disciple—is the only spirit, I take it, in which a Christian can die, is a chief mark therefore of a dying Christian,—the soul dissolved as it were in the Divine love, and yearning that all, even the wrongdoer, even the murderer, should be saved. It embraces friends first, and then extends itself even to foes. Even the careless world has caught a glimpse of the beauty and fitness of it; and there is no man who does not wish to die at peace with all. You have seen, I am sure, in your dear ones who have gone from you to Jesus, this strange solicitude, so Christ-like, so beautiful, crossing the shadows of death with gleams of immortality. You remember how anxious they were to reach all who were dear to them with their fond farewell; how anxious too, as the decays of nature would permit, to charge all to make

sure of Christ, and so of that blessed hope in which they died; how their dying-bed was a very fountain of solicitous affection which flowed and flowed till it was sealed up by death! And all the little heart-burnings, the suspicions and dissatisfactions, the sense of wrong at the hands of those from whom very different things were looked for,—how they get cleared away, and all is peace, and all is love! Then can a Christian in that broad light which shows him all human things in their real insignificance indeed 'love his enemies, and bless them that curse him, and pray for them that despitefully use him and persecute him;' then can a Stephen say, though his wounds are open and fresh, and the deadly shower of missiles is falling still, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' 'And when he had said this, he fell asleep.'

II. His death,—what it was. 'He fell asleep.'

The use of sleep as a name for death is not of course a Bible peculiarity, or a New Testament peculiarity. The heathens in ancient times, and all men in every age, have been accustomed to speak of death as a sleep, of dying as falling asleep. The difference between their use of the word and that of the Lord and His Apostles, is, that with the one it is confessedly a figure of speech; with the other it is no figure of speech, but a most blessed reality. We have anticipations

in the Old Testament of the Christian use of it,—as, for example, in those far-seeing words of the man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz,—'Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.' But in the New Testament, and first of all, in the words of the Lord Himself, this way of speaking of death has its proper tone: 'Give place,' He said, 'for the maid is not dead but sleepeth.' 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth: and I go that I may awake him out of sleep.' And so Luke, the beloved physician, found it the fittest word to represent the death of the first martyr Stephen; and Paul enriched and unfolded it when he spake of them that 'sleep in Jesus.' It was dear, unspeakably dear and consoling, to the Christian Church in its early days. Of the tombs in the catacombs of Rome it is said, 'The very name of death was unknown, even in that city of the dead.' 'In Christ,' 'in peace,' 'deposited and laid to rest in peace,' 'Valeria sleeps.' Such are the ever-recurring expressions of a faith which had shorn death of its gloom, and disarmed it of its sting. And that word *cemetery*, which has come down to us from these earlier ages, and with which we are so familiar, means nothing else than *a sleeping chamber*, where the trees mourn, and the green grass waves over couches

of rest in which our dead are laid till the resurrection.

I am not going to venture any guesses about the nature of paradise, or the intermediate state. There are two plain things which are conveyed by this particular phrase—two plain reasons for its use. The *first* is, The awaking which is in prospect; and the *second*, The peace in which a Christian dies. 'And when he had said this, he fell asleep.'

1. *The awaking which is in prospect.*—So the Lord would not suffer it to be said of Lazarus and of the maiden, the daughter of Jairus, that they were dead, because He was about to raise them up, and make it seem as if they had only been sunk in a deep slumber. And out of a Christian's union to Jesus, it comes that death is no more death, because its gloom is irradiated with the light of coming resurrection. This night is like those nights at midsummer when it is scarcely ever dark, and the fading lights of the day which is gone have scarcely passed, before the sky is filled with the growing lights of the day which is to be. Through death, over death, extinguishing it, taking the heart out of it, making it like a drop in the sea, sweeps the everlasting life, as the Saviour says, 'He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die.'

The exile in a foreign country will not grudge

a long voyage over tempestuous seas, if it bring him in sight of the rocky shores of his native land, and restore him to the enchanted scenes of his youth. 'Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days, for the love he had to her;' and so for the sake of the awakening of the resurrection morning, it will seem to the child of God as nothing, that his soul should dwell for a while in silence, that his life should be *hid* with Christ in God, inasmuch as 'when Christ who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory.' The work which we cannot finish before the nightfall, how contentedly we leave it over to the morning, and lay us down, thinking of our clear head and more vigorous hand, when the healthier breezes blow and the sunshine streams through the window. There is a certain form of farewell which means 'Till we meet again,' in which the period of separation is as it were obliterated, and the past and the future meet. So is it with death; so is it with the resurrection of the dead. 'It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.' Lie down for a little while. Think of the day that is almost breaking. Remember, by your dead brother's grave, that it must give back the

precious loan which you have lent it, we know not how soon. 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'

2. *The Peace in which a Christian dies.*—I must have a word about this death. I must speak my mind of this enemy. I have felt his breath on my face. I have seen him come like a great tide, rising, sweeping on, wave after wave. He is the cruellest monster, tearing with his claws and teeth. He has no bowels of mercy; tears and sighs which would move a heart of stone cannot touch his. He has no sense of pity for the suffering, nor reverence for the noble and good, nor admiration for the lovely, nor fear for the strong. Between the old and the young he refuses to distinguish; between the useful and the useless, the kindly and the unkind; or, rather, he takes the best. He smites down one whose life is golden and summer-like; he passes by another who longs for his coming as a blessed release. He crouches in the corners of the streets; he steals in at the door like a thief; and oh! no lion in the forest, no tiger with his bloody maw, leaps on his prey like death. Baffle whom you will, him you cannot baffle; you may take all the city except his iron citadel. 'The *last* enemy that shall be destroyed is death.'

Peace! peace! There is another voice than the voice of wounded, bleeding, almost maddened

nature, and it says, 'I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.' For the end of a child of God is peace, unutterable peace. Not the sentimental peace which work-worn men associate with

> 'Graves grass-green beside a grey church-tower,
> Washed with still rains, and daisy-blossomed;'

but a peace which has God's word for the warrant of it, and the very bosom of the Saviour for its couch of rest. Yes, I say, the bosom of the Saviour for its couch of rest. Have you thought what we mean by that sweet word 'in peace?' Is it not that peace is the bed on which you lie, peace the warm covering which you fold around you, peace the very air you breathe, the sky above you, and the earth beneath your feet. Carry all this over to that other word of the Apostle, which is the true key to the peace of a Christian's death, asleep *in Jesus*. Oh, this is rest for the weary! this is home for the homeless! What a tenderness of enfolding arms! what a soothing sweetness of unalterable affection! what a strength of imperturbable calm! 'Asleep in Jesus!' 'So he giveth his beloved sleep!' We may well part with our dear ones, then, for this. Here it was the toilsome journey, the hurrying battle, the buffeting wave. There it is Jesus all, Jesus only, Jesus for ever! And if this be my lot, oh, I take

back all my hard words about the destroyer, and call him *friend;* yea, an angel of God to me. This, this is heaven. 'I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.' 'Amen! Even so come, Lord Jesus.'

Oh friends! these things are more important, more near to you than anything else could be. *You, you* must die; for yourself, tread the mazes of the valley; for yourself, learn the secret which none comes back to tell. And as has been well said, I need not tell you by whom, when your time comes, you will find death 'the same great solitary momentous thing, as if you alone, in the whole world, had to die.' Oh! let the breaks in your families, the beloved graves you know of, preach to you of this as I cannot. Without Christ death is a horror unspeakable. With Christ—ah! I know—in what strange peace it is possible to die. Live with this faith in your heart, and you will die with it there. 'I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' 'And when he had said this, he fell asleep.'

XI.

LIFE IN HEAVEN.

'Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.'—LUKE XX. 36.

THIS glory that is to be is not dreamed of by a painter or poet, and then sung of or painted after the likeness of his dream: it is plainly declared and set forth by the Lord Jesus, who alone could tell the secrets of the heavenly world, for even on earth He was the Son of Man which is in heaven. We may accept it then as certain, as neither under nor over drawn, and set ourselves to consider and realize it as best we may. This is Christ's statement of the doctrine of the Resurrection. The proof comes afterwards, and with it, directly at least, I have nothing here to do. And out of this statement of the resurrection-glory, I take but one feature or lineament, which is perhaps the most fundamental one of all, viz., that there is no more death: 'Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto

the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.'

Now, if you think of it, the three propositions of this verse are all merely variations of one theme—the theme of the blessed immortality of the children of God. The simple fact is stated, 'Neither can they die any more.' Then it is illustrated by the case of the deathless angels: 'For they are equal unto the angels;' and finally, the reason and result of this immortality is given, 'And are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.' Life in heaven, then, is—

I. Immortal.
II. Angel-like.
III. Filially related to God.

1. Life in heaven is *immortal:* 'Neither can they die any more.'

Times are changed indeed. On earth death is the most certain and unavoidable of all things. Whatever be hindered, averted, passed by, it cannot be so. Whatever else we may do, or not do, we go on, all of us without fail, to die. All our thoughts of life, and the activities, emotions, and deeds which make the sum of life, are cut through at a certain point—certain and uncertain; certain as to the fact, but uncertain as to the time. And the truth is, that human life on earth

—human history—revolves on the fact of death as its centre, and is coloured all through with tints of death: 'One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, while the earth abideth ever;' and so there is need of 'marrying, and giving in marriage.' And so a deathless world is a thing not at all conceivable by us—a world without the going out and coming in which are characteristic of the present one; a world with no deep shadow alongside of its brightness. Verily, old things shall have passed away, and all things become new, in that time concerning which it is said, 'Neither can they die any more.'

Observe, *first*, how, to those of whom Christ speaks, the glory is heightened by contrast. They knew all of them what it is to die. They were in the prison-house, and so can appreciate the sweets of liberty; sick, and health is doubly prized by them; strangers and foreigners, and so made drunk, if one might so speak, with delights of home. To see every path which they could follow terminating in a grave; to do all things with the haste and uncertainty of those on whose efforts death may lay his arrest at any moment; to rejoice with trembling, and hold every possession only for a brief season, and draw nearer and nearer to a great darkness—that was what they were accustomed to; they had no experience of anything else but that.

Now all is changed. Life on earth has vanished like a dream; for Time is the dream and Eternity the waking reality—a dream sad, though sweet sometimes; all that was pleasant in it but a suggestion of pleasures to be found at God's right hand; and a dream haunted all through, encompassed on every side by the shadow of death. And instead of it has come a time when every joy approves itself real by its lastingness, when the tears are wiped from off all faces, and death withdraws its gloom, is vanquished, and gone: 'Neither can they die any more.'

And, *secondly*, what a glory it is! When God conferred on His intelligent creatures the gift of immortality, He made them, one might almost say, as gods. The flowers fade, and the leaves fall, and all material nature must of necessity wear out and crumble away. All this apart altogether from the curse with which God visited the world when Adam fell. But those whom He made spirits, as He is a Spirit, are immortal. They began to be, while He existed from all eternity; but they shall never cease to be. Only God's duration of being can measure that of the imperishable essence which He made in His own image and likeness. Men have lost, unless at rare moments, the sense of immortality. They live many of them as if there were nothing beyond the grave. Sin does not nullify this gift

of immortality. It remains to be to the impenitent a fearful curse. They have polluted the being which God gave them, they have bound on it a load of misery which cannot be removed; but it is indestructible still, and the pollution and the misery are therefore for ever. Immortality! eternity! how inconceivably painful are the words when they mean an immortal anguish and eternal hell!

But when the immortality is one of holiness and peace, when the shadow of death is withdrawn, and the soul's endless history is an endless blessedness, what a golden precious gift is this of a being which cannot die, which the passing away of the years and ages brings no nearer to its close, for it has none! Then is man lifted almost to the level of God; admitted within the temple of God's eternal presence, where all things are from everlasting to everlasting. What fulness of joy is here! stint or limitation known no longer; no dreary voice calling always in chilling tones—the end, the end! And what possibilities of progress when the day can always be reckoned on for the work; and the strength, strength of a Divine life, with its sweet pulsations, which in obedience is blessed, and in labour rests. Oh, is it not the lost found; the ideal realized; the blessed bud of our human life opened into its perfect flower! God's gift of im-

mortality anxiously possessed at last—'Neither can they die any more.'

2. Life in heaven is *angel-like*, 'For they are equal unto the angels.'

We are not told much in Scripture of other orders of intelligences besides our own among the creatures of God. The great void between us, God's human creatures, and Him, our Creator, is filled, so far as it could be filled, by the blessed angels in their shining ranks; the most exalted of whom, however, is infinitely beneath God, who is his Creator as well as ours. Of these in the Scriptures we are told but little. Almost all our ideas about them, which we think to be scriptural in their origin, are but more or less poetical fancies. They are mentioned always in connexion with their work of ministering to those who shall be heirs of salvation, and they appear as men;—so that before that world in which they have their home, and before all that belongs to their especial being and nature, a veil is drawn. Except, perhaps, in such a passage as this, when we get a momentary glimpse through that veil to learn this one thing, that death never visits that country where they dwell, that they are immortal, and that men become like them when they also partake of a holy and blessed immortality: 'Neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels.'

The angels do not die. Of death, and all the miseries implied in death, they know only by seeing it in the course of their ministries on earth; by their task of bearing home to heaven the spirits of the just. With them there is no need of 'marrying, and giving in marriage.' The generations do not succeed each other, grow green, and fade like summer and autumn leaves. In their country there are no graves; and the wail of widow and orphan, the heart-breaking sorrow of those who watch their loved ones fade like shadows out of the world, are to them unknown. Why? That is the question. There can be but one answer,—an answer which casts still another light on the nature and history of the angels. We know too well the meaning, the origin of death. It is because they have never sinned, because they have kept their first estate. Death is a sealed book to them, because they sought not that knowledge of good and evil, which was the price for which the human race sold itself to ruin.

There are people who would have you believe that the knowledge of evil—the experience of sin and the fruits of sin—were necessary to make a perfect world, and to whom the condition of the angels, strangers to sin and strangers to death, seems in fact a kind of celestial babyhood. True descendants these of our mother Eve, when

she listened to the tempter! Oh remember, in an age when to know this and that, to increase knowledge is made something like the chief end of man, that the knowing may be no blessing but a curse; that all depends upon the kind of knowledge—the character of the things which are known. Alas! that, in a world like this, so full of the traces of a universal ruin, knowledge seems scarcely conceivable to man, but as knowledge of evil. The promise of the tempter has been fulfilled—the latter part of it at least. The depths of evil have indeed been fathomed. Some have become wise with the devil's wisdom—have taken high degrees in the devil's school. What would we give, any one of us, who has lived but a little while in the world, to get wiped out from our minds the horrible, hateful knowledge of many things we had far better never have known; to have our imaginations made pure and clean, and sweet as an angel's; to be rid for ever of what is branded in our very souls—an experimental acquaintance with the vileness of sin and the awfulness of death? We must indeed go back, as Christ Himself tells us, to a kind of second childhood, if we would receive the kingdom, unlearn our wisdom, lay aside our strength; too content to be what men call foolish, weak, innocent, childish, because that is to be like Adam in the days of paradise; yea, like the blessed angels now.

Oh what a sore is healed, what a fountain of suffering dried, what a quenching is there of unhallowed fires, of lights that shine only to lead astray—vile as the phosphorescence of a decaying corpse! 'Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels.'

3. Life in Heaven is *filially related to God:* 'And are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.'

In these words the Lord indicates His great argument, more fully brought out afterwards, for the resurrection which the Sadducees denied. But here He puts it the converse way. That argument is to this effect: those who have God for their God, who are His children, or are in covenant with Him, cannot pass out of existence, must live for ever. Now, God said of the Fathers of the Jewish Church, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' Therefore Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob live, though they have passed away from the earth, and there must be a resurrection. We have that very argument here in brief. It turns all on this, that the children of God and the children of the resurrection are the same. The one character implies the other. No one is one of these who is not both. Prove that any one is a child of God, and you have proved him heir of a sure and certain resurrection. Prove that any one is a child of the

resurrection, and you have established his claim to be a child of God. Thus was the claim of the Lord Jesus, himself to be the Son of the Divine Father established; and thus shall the filial relationship of all God's adopted children be in the day of the resurrection, which is the day also of the manifestation of the sons of God.

The name 'children of God' affords a double security for a resurrection, and a life that shall last for ever and ever.

First, The security of a covenant.—Those are God's, the children of God, who have made a covenant of peace with Him; nay, more, in Jesus Christ, the Mediator, have entered into an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; sure on the human part, because all its conditions have been fulfilled by Christ; sure on the Divine part, because 'God is not a man that he should lie, nor the Son of Man that he should repent.' Oh, not one of those who have been given to Jesus, and saved by Him, can possibly perish. Because He lives, they shall live also. His resurrection was a pledge of theirs; yea, in a certain sense, *was* theirs. When the people of God, those that have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice, are gathered together to Him, not one of them shall be wanting. All their days in the world, amidst temptations, and fiery trials, and assaults of Satan; in the swellings of Jordan, the wrestle

with the last enemy; in the grave where they sleep in dust to all eternity, the covenant unfolds and bears them up like arms which are never wearied and never withdrawn; and whatsoever these arms enfold, lives with a sure, unfading, deathless life: 'They, the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.'

Second, The security of vital union to God.—He has graciously made them His children, not only by an act of adoption, but by a spiritual new birth. And from the moment of that new birth, they are as those into whom has been breathed an everlasting life. There is indeed a deathless principle within them. The child is in its father's likeness. Death hath no more dominion over the children of God than it hath over God himself. Heaven is a Father's house. God surrounds Himself with those to whom He bears this near, sweet relation of Fatherhood. And only when His place is empty will theirs be empty; only when the fountain of His life is dried up, will they cease to have life; only when eternity ends, and all and nothing are the same, will they be able to die. The height of the climax is reached. We saw that the life of a saint in heaven was like an angel's. We see now that it is like God's, and we marvel over this wondrous glory: 'Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the

children of God, being the children of the resurrection.'

I know I have pictured forth this glory very faintly. I know that it is too bright and sweet for any words of mine. In setting it forth, I have set forth the way to it also. It is through Jesus, and the covenant sealed in His blood. Come to Him, I beseech you,—His death yours *for* you, His life yours *in* you. Is that indestructible soul God has given you, my friend, is it to live for ever, or to die for ever? May this lot be yours and mine: 'Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.'

PAPERS AND ESSAYS.

I.

COLLEGE FRIENDSHIPS.[1]

. . . . . .

PERHAPS the best way of giving an idea of what College Friendships are, will be to describe a little society of cronies with whom the writer is familiar. All, it may be said without vanity, are men of considerable standing in their college classes, and this is the strongest bond of their friendship. Every one feels that his neighbours are better than himself in some respects; that in some particulars they both merit and compel his admiration, and he yields it accordingly. The little society to which reference has been made consists of four, two of them tall and two short; two from the country, and two natives of the city, but all are to some extent metaphysicians and philosophers, and as profound as they can be in their opinions of mankind and things in general.

One is tall and somewhat ungainly in figure, fair of complexion, and with long but somewhat

[1] From the 'Manse Journal,' 1855. *Anno ætatis* 18.

curling hair. His length of limb is quite unusual, and it would cost him but little trouble to walk or run at the rate of eight miles an hour. His external appearance, on a cursory examination, is not fitted at once to produce a favourable impression, but look a little more narrowly, and you will find traces of much that is amiable in disposition, and much that is powerful in intellect. His mind is strong, but somewhat immature, and suggesting at every turn an analogy with the body of the long unwieldy growing lad. His conversation and his writing are in unison with this idea of his mind, for they want in point and pungency, and lumber somewhat, but there are visible in the midst of this the heavings of undeveloped strength. Whatever the subject be, he takes it in with a comprehensive grasp, and, though slowly, perhaps, he digs down to the darkest depths, and leaves no secret unveiled, no treasure undiscovered. He has the refined taste of a man of cultivated mind, and a wit that is often keen and sparkling. None can catch a joke sooner, or relish it more; and the beautiful, whenever he finds it, will elicit his rapturous admiration. I can only add, that in his manners and conduct, though no richer than students generally are in this world's goods, he shows himself every inch a gentleman.

The second member of our coterie is a very dif-

ferent person. Short he is of stature, more than six inches less than his friend whom we have been describing. His hair is short and black, and curls round a brow which would elicit the praise of a phrenologist. His features are regular, but there lurk traces of an irresistible waggery about his mouth and eyes. He is not a man of breadth and comprehension like his companion, but rather of minute detail. This shows itself in a proneness to judge by little particular appearances, and to criticise characters and writings, rather by pointing out individual faults than by throwing into the scale the guiding and ruling spirit of the whole. He is amazingly acute, like a little terrier dog—if we may be allowed the inelegant comparison—in scenting out improprieties, wherever they are to be found, but he often misses the great general excellence of which these are but imperfect manifestations. His opinions are delivered in a clear and sententious form, with extraordinary vigour and animation, which alone would obtain for them a favourable hearing. He can be racy and humorous when he pleases, and though he is sometimes inclined to domineer over his slower and more peaceable friend, yet the harmony between them subsists uninterrupted, for, like Melanchthon and Luther, the mild gentleness of the one restrains the fierce impetuosity of the other, while the fire and ardour of the latter

supply some vigour and activity, where it would otherwise be wanting. These are the city gentlemen, both pupils of the High School some years ago, and its distinguished ornaments. The little and younger one has the advantage of his neighbour, by being a year ahead of him in the progress of his college curriculum, but notwithstanding this their classes are often the same.

Now we come to the third of our illustrious four. He comes from the country, and reveals this fact, which would not be otherwise discoverable, by his Doric breadth of accent. His face at once discloses his inward character. It is chiefly marked by an expansive brow and a bright eye, which flashes when he becomes animated in discussion. There is nothing that is exactly gentle or winning in his face,—nothing that would exactly delight the fair sex. Everywhere there appear the signs of manly firmness and strength. It is not the gay flight of fancy which pleases him, not the gentle flow of polished oratory, but vigour of thought, and corresponding sternness of diction. He delights in hard metaphysics, and easily masticates and digests what would break the teeth of most people. Rather would he toil up a rugged and thorny path of thought, up rough overhanging cliffs and slippery surfaces, through a tangled maze of brambles and briers,

than wander in luxurious ease down the smooth pathway, with a green velvety carpet, or where

'You scarce can see the grass for flowers.'

Rather would he pick his steps through mud and darkness, contented if each step revealed to him the secrets of his sure though difficult and uncomfortable path, than soar in regions of gladness and sunlight, amid fleecy clouds and balmy airs, as if his wings were imagination only, and his flight served for no other end than amusement. And yet he desiderates this part of human nature, which is essential, as well as the other, not so much to the successful thinker as to the successful expounder, and he admires that brilliancy in others which he himself has not. And yet he would rather forego it, if its possession would deprive him of one particle of his hard-headedness. Though now he is without the usual juvenile fondness for the florid, yet I doubt not but those architectural decorations of which the edifice of his style is still barren, will be added some day, and transform the bare but massive Doric pillar to the handsome and elegant Corinthian.

What shall I say of the fourth, the youngest of the little group? He is from the country, like the last of the other three. He is tall and fair, like the first of them, and that is all which I am permitted to tell. If there were praises uttered,

it would be laid to the score of self-conceit; if blame, it would be referred to 'fishing for a compliment.' Neither of the horns of this dilemma is exactly comfortable, and therefore I shall keep clear of them altogether.

Such are our four individually: let me now speak of them collectively. On ordinary College days, when there is plenty of work going, they may not see each other, or only see, and nothing more. At such a time every one of them bends his attention closely to his proper duty, leaving all other considerations out of account. Each of them is serious and grave, as becomes those who are engaged in important study. Each of them feels the sanctity of his occupation, and of the place which he occupies, as if he had been ushered into some awful Presence, where he must bow and adore. Now and then there may be frolicking and fun, but this is the exception, not the rule. These occasions are the relaxations from toil, the more keenly enjoyed when they come in the intervals of labour. Some light-headed youths will always be smoking and amusing themselves, instead of setting steadily to work, but these students whom we have accepted as our model take a clearer view of their situation and their duty. Now they are grave men, with a work to do, and a high resolve, truce to mirth for a time, for in such circumstances it would be little short of sacrilege.

But outside of the class-room, and away from study, there ceases to be any need for restraint. The hour of work is past, and the hour of enjoyment is come. Now for a saunter on the crowded and showy Princes Street, or a quiet ramble among the shadowing trees and green grass of the Meadows and Links, or a breezy walk round Arthur Seat. Who would not be merry then, when, with springy step and elated heart, the four go arm-in-arm, amid a rattling flow of conversation, which is generally the strangest mixture of the serious and the comic, now in earnest tones and voices that thrill responsive to the feelings of the heart, now jocular and merry, and mixed with many a hearty laugh. On some Saturday a longer stretch will be undertaken, as over the green Pentlands, or along the shores of the sunny Forth to Queensferry, or inland to Dalkeith. Many a happy day has been thus spent, and not a useless one in other respects, besides that of its health-bringing efficacy. At such a time our youths would lay bare each the secrets of his heart, and each would learn more of nature and of man. Their views of this hurrying world, into which they have but little entered, would be strengthened or connected by comparison; their sympathies with humanity made warmer and more discriminating. 'Iron sharpeneth iron,' said the Preacher, speaking figuratively of the intercourse of human minds,

and here his words are exemplified. Besides, there is something ennobling always in the free air and healthful exercise, as well as in the contact with kindred minds. As says Wordsworth--

> 'The impulse from a vernal wood
> May teach you more of man,
> Of moral evil, and of good,
> Than all the sages can.'

Then there will be many meetings in each other's rooms, and tea-parties, vulgarly called 'Cookie-shines,' such as students only can get up. Liberty Hall and Bachelors' Commons are the order of the day. The fair sex, and all the style and ceremony which they bring with them, are entirely excluded. There is no observed routine politeness, but all is hearty, and homely, and gladsome. There is no reserve or embarrassment to the tongue, but talk flows freely, and the secrets of all hearts are manifested. How fresh and healthful the impulses of generous and ingenuous youth, when spirit finds its kindred spirit, and feeling finds a ready echo. Nothing here of this world's black-heartedness; nothing of the petty jealousies which make men miserable, and darken this beautiful earth; nothing of the evil-speaking and sneaking malice to be found in many a heart, all fair externally, but poisoned by evil influences, and foul and rotten within. Back! corroding care, which tracest deep furrows, and sheddest a mournful

gloom on the broad brow of manhood in its prime! Back! cowardly passion, the Devil's worst handiwork, with thy bullets lodged by a hand unseen, and thy assassin stabs in the dark! Back! jealousy, not here shalt thou spit forth thy poison, not here shalt thou wither the fair promise of nature with a blasting and a mildew! Weird sisters three, ye cannot breathe in such an atmosphere, nor darken such a scene with vile form and wrinkled face. Back to your loathsome dens amid the vile and the sunken, or with the polished or refined, calm and complaisant without, but diseased or envenomed within. Leave the young heart alone, in its first joys and sorrows; pollute not with your breath its impulses, like those of nature's spring-time, and the buoyancy of its new-born life!

But we must leave the wanderings of imagination, and return to our details. The lady of the house must be represented by one of the male sex, whose manipulations in handling the tea-pot, that sceptre of woman's sovereignty, are perhaps not so delicate as hers would be, but yet sufficient for the purpose. The tea is likely to be good, no wishy-washy decoction, but strong as the heart of any old woman or any young student could desire. Strange how these two classes of human beings, so different from each other, should unite in this peculiar taste. Yet the stimulant in both cases

is meant to serve a similar purpose. In both it strings the nerves to the proper pitch, but in the one it is meant to loosen the tongue, in whose vibrations aged womanhood, and perhaps womanhood not very aged, finds its greatest enjoyment; while in the other it is intended to set the mind to work more actively, and evolve the thoughts, to which the tongue will give by no means garrulous utterance. Almost fabulous quantities of this liquid are consumed by the old stagers, while the freshmen, yet unemancipated from the two weak cupfuls of their childhood, begin gradually to increase their quantum, but yet wonder at the tea-consuming powers of their seniors. The meal of hospitality and conviviality over, the hours of evening fleet swiftly past in lively discussions, into which the fervour and honest earnestness of youth is thrown, till the conversation sparkles like the sun-lit foam of the brook in its rocky bed, or the broken waves of the sea which flash in the dreamy moon-beams.

Shall these happy hours pass away, and become dim memories of the past? Shall they shine in the mocking distance to the traveller through life, like the lights of a happy home which he has left, to pursue his darkling way? Shall they become but visions of a day gone by, fading images of life's young dream, recollections which will return in faint echoes to the sleeping soul, only to awaken

it to a sense of present unhappiness? May the pulse ever beat as free and feverless as now! May the mental and the bodily eye be ever as clear for the perception of the beautiful and the good, and as full of a loathing for the vile and the base! And may He who is the searcher of hearts, who is the father and the guide of His people, lead these young men in the right path,—onward through a lifetime of love to God, and love to man,—unshadowed by regrets for days misspent, cheered by the Divine presence and blessing as by the atmosphere of another world, and the reflected light of the upper sanctuary!

II.

TO THE NEW COLLEGE MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION.

My Fellow-Students,—It is no easy matter for me to essay, as I must now do, to address you from a chair, which its past history has crowned with much honour and importance. Indeed, I have more diffidence in the matter than it would be wise in me to tell you of. . . . .

In an address of this kind, one has the world before him where to choose, and it is difficult to say such things as are fitting to be said, and, at the same time, to avoid being perfectly aimless and miscellaneous. It seems best that any words which may be spoken shall be as frank and simple as possible. . . . . It will be best to remain as near home as possible, and think what the existence of a Missionary Association is fitted to suggest to us in the way of admonition and exhortation; what lights it throws on the duties and possibilities of this life of ours.

You will pardon me, if, in trying to set these before you and myself, I make no attempt to soar

very high, at least at the outset. And the *first* thing which I would speak a word about is the *attendance of the members of this Society here on the Saturday mornings.*

When we think of this, a question is flung into the midst of us, which it will be well for us to take up and look at. It is a question of *conscientiousness,* of the commonest honesty—of our being, what we call ourselves, and what we profess to be. Unless we be fettered elsewhere by impossibilities, or unless we are so miserably and wickedly indifferent that we care for none of these things, we cannot but feel that the first and plainest obligation laid upon us, by the presence of a society with such objects in view, within the walls of the college, is the duty of attendance at its meetings. It would not be worth while to speak of this, unless we were under strong temptations to forget it. Let me set before you the circumstances in which the duty runs no small risk of going to the wall. The scene is winter, and between nine and ten in the morning. A fire burns cheerily in the grate, and the warm aroma of breakfast ascends from the table. In effective contrast the wind whirls round the roof without, and the sky is a dreary grey, and the rain-drops rattle on the window. There is, it may be, the *Witness* newspaper, still dear to the hearts of Free Churchmen, to tempt; and there

are books at hand, the new ones, which excite our curiosity, or the old and tried friends of many a day and midnight. What is the man to do who finds himself in such circumstances as these? Will he make a hasty meal, think you, and hurry out of the midst of the comforts which would keep him at home, into the cold or the storm, and through it, to find such shelter and such enlivenment as he can get in this room, which will look gaunt and grim enough on such a morning. What he will do is doubtful; what he ought to do is plain enough; and what he cannot fail to do, if he is manly and unselfish and earnest about the matter. I think we are none the worse of getting into such a difficulty if we come out of it on the right side; because this little trial is just a type of many greater ones which must be faced; because life is full of such little crises where we shall be put to the test that we may rise superior to a comfortable inertia; because for every one of us getting through the world will be a hard pull up-hill, and the sooner and the more thoroughly we can brace ourselves for that the better; and because the man who cannot abandon what pleases his sense, and go through the storm to seek a higher good, is not the man to help and bless and sympathize with the sorrowing and struggling world. . . .

2. But suppose every one were to come who could,

and no one, when he asked himself whether he had done his duty to the Society in this respect were at all amenable to self-reproach, there is another obligation laid upon us, which, I fear, we must every one of us feel that we have in some degree neglected. To this place we come seeking to know more of God's work, to know more of God, aiming in one way or another, not at our own spiritual good alone, but at the advancement of the kingdom of Christ and the eternal well-being of lost human creatures all over the world. Has this enterprise of ours been uniformly consecrated with prayer? Has the blessing of God been constantly invoked? Have we come from our knees at the throne of grace, with our hearts on fire, and our faces shining as Moses' was when he came forth from meeting with God? Have the longings and the strivings after a fuller revelation of the Spirit and power of God, which this Society professes to gather into a compact mass, and to which it seeks to give a unity of effect; have *they* risen up within us and bowed as before the Most High, and burdened our spirits when we drew near to Him, and driven us in felt unworthiness to Jesus, in felt helplessness to the strong one on whom our help is laid? I bring an accusation against myself in this matter, and my mouth is stopped, and I stand guilty before God. Oh let us pray more for many things; but,

among the rest, most earnestly for this Society and for our meetings in this place, and they shall grow to mean more for us than they have ever done; yea, we shall come to them as with empty pitchers and thirsty souls to fountains of living water, around which are spread the green pastures where the flock of the Good Shepherd is feeding and lying down to rest at noon, that we may draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation. In this way, above all other, shall the Pygmalion statue of an academical cultivation, grand and beautiful, but cold, become informed with a Promethean fire caught from the altar of God.

3. Another thought arises out of the preceding, as to the *spirit* in which we are to take our place as members of this Society, and to attend at its meetings. It need scarcely be said that we have most solemnly bound ourselves to give its interests the most careful and diligent furtherance. But let us not stay contented with a general proposition; let us push it into its practical applications. We must manifest an anxiety for the maintenance of its life and spirit; we must be ready to place at its disposal all that we have of warm enthusiasm and practical sagacity; we must sacrifice our own will to the general will, our own good to the general good; we must do our endeavour to save it from pecuniary difficulties; we must strengthen the hands of those who are

laden with the drudgery of keeping its manifold machinery at work. Surely the furtherance which we all promise means just such things as these.

But it may occur to somebody that these specifications of particular duties are intended to cut the throat of independent action and freedom of speech. *Μὴ γένοιτο.* It must be allowed, that in most human societies, and it may be in this one, though we know not yet, there are men so miserably negative in their views and characters that they can do nothing but *object*, and who, while far from ready to be helpful with advice or assistance, are always on their feet protesting against hole-and-cornering, jobbing, cliquing, etc., on the part of those who have the hard work to do, and as their only reward acquire a certain measure of power and influence. These men have their use, and may let the daylight in on some things; but before they can stand justified, it must be clear that a desire to be helpful towards the general good was consciously present to them, and that they were not merely gratifying a propensity to opposition, else they deserve nothing but condemnation, for the good which may result must be good coming out of their evil, and nowise included in their purpose and aim. Let us keep the general good carefully before us, to the extinction of our own personal appetencies,

and we shall know when to speak and to be silent, when to work or to hold our hand from working.

The reigning spirit among us must be a spirit of peace, and love, and brotherhood. It is difficult to keep this alive sometimes. It is one of those ideals which the stormy atmosphere of our human world shatters and mars perpetually. It has sometimes gathered up the skirts of its robe, and spread its wings and fled from us in this place. Last session was rather a stormy one, and the recollection of it makes me long that this one may not be such. There is something selfish in this longing, for I fear lest I should not inherit the wise and gentle spirit of my predecessor. It does not follow, however, as a matter of course, that the turmoil which has passed away was a sin against the law of brotherhood and peace. There is much talk of peace and union in these days, which is so far wise and true, and so far also a mere foolish babblement. The devil, in his garment of light, and all false prophets, the servants of the devil, can be eloquent preachers of 'Peace, peace, when there is no peace.' Peace is the narcotic which the enemy of the soul administers to put duty and principle to sleep. Does not every one of us feel, in opposition to this lying spirit, that, let him get hold of the right, by the merest fringe or border of it, and know in the deepest certainty which he can

attain to, that it is right, he will cleave to it with a death-grasp, and be ready, were that required of him, to become an Ishmaelite, with his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him? Is not this a true and glorious ideal, but one scarcely within our reach? When, then, in the face of plain duty and unmistakable principle, men come with smug faces and oily tongues preaching peace to us, shall we not awaken into indignation, saying, 'Peace with tyranny and wrong! Peace with lying and hypocrisy! Peace with sin and shame! A covenant with death! An agreement with hell! Nay, verily, no peace, but war to the knife! battle to the death! if we would be true men, and not spies and traitors in the camp of the servants of God?'

4. It is time, however, to look abroad on the wide prospect which in this Society opens up before us. In this there is much at present to draw our attention and awaken the deepest feelings of our nature; much also to suggest to us new views of duty, and lay on us a new load of obligation. There is much in these days most blessed and hopeful. Foreshadowings of a mighty and ennobling future fall across the pathway of the present. A militant Church seems to draw near its triumph, to carry one after another of the almost impregnable citadels, to sweep victoriously across the alien lands, to sheathe its sword in

the hearts of the King's enemies, to approach rapidly to the time when instead of thorns an aureola of glory shall encircle its brow, and its battle-soiled raiment and dinted weapon shall be exchanged for the white robe and the palm. Along a wide horizon a light is breaking forth and brightening, lovelier than the summer dawn, which, we pray God, may swiftly spring up into the mid-heaven and illuminate the whole earth. *What* the issues shall be, and *when*, we know not, but there is room for the most unbounded hopefulness; and it is a cold heart indeed, and one with little longing in it for the glory of the Master, which will not awaken, in these days, to higher reaches of faith and devotion.

While we regard with the utmost reverence the remarkable displays of Divine power which we have heard of or seen, it seems to me that we have a solemn duty to discharge (not in attempting to take the true measure of the movement, for that is certainly beyond us), but in endeavouring to make a wise discrimination between what is essential and what accidental, between what is false and what is true. . . . .

And *first*, it has struck me, and not me alone, that a dangerous prominence is being given to young converts, especially when they are peculiarly unenlightened in every way but the one, and that intellectual darkness is getting to be re-

garded as a sort of guarantee for the inverse ratio of spiritual light. It is, indeed, good and beautiful that a soul which has broken with a bound from darkness to light, and which is, therefore, glowing with the fervour of first love, should be brought to kindle others with the contagion of its own baptism of fire. But that such a one, first struggling and then triumphant, should be exposed to the writhings of its anguish, and then in the plenitude of its peace to the inspection of crowds gaping around it at every hour of the day, and receiving its fevered utterances as almost the words of inspiration, is to me a most questionable, nay, an altogether unbeautiful, proceeding.

But, again, there is undoubtedly a tendency to mistake mere noise and rant for earnest pleading with God and with man. There certainly has been a notable absence of this where one might almost have expected to find it; but let us not shut our eyes to the danger, let us exalt a wise humility, and do what we can to repress any outcome of noisy and pretentious ignorance.

I cannot look without fear on the leading place which is often taken by young men, especially at an age when an undue self-estimation and a headlong indifference to mature wisdom are besetting sins. There is an advantage in the energy and enthusiasm which they throw into everything; but I have heard with much pain of cases

in which they assumed the leading position assigned to them in a good work with an arrogance and presumption which made their participation in the matter not a help but a hindrance, and gave opportunity for the entrance of the enemy. In extraordinary times there will always be somewhat of froth and spume thrown to the surface, but the current may move deeply and strongly all the while.

Once more, the monstrous inconsistency has been exhibited of the machinery of revival being actively set in motion by men who were somewhat blind and remiss in their obedience to some of the plainest commandments of God. The inconsistency is naturally to be explained by the effect of wondrous doings without us in drawing our attention away from the duties and necessities of our own spiritual life. Such a case has lately come under my knowledge, in which principle was sacrificed to a specious appearance of peace and union, and the consequence was that the whole came to an end amidst a tempest of uncharitable feeling and unchristian speech.

We cannot and dare not shut our eyes to these evils. Let us pray earnestly that the Lord will make an end of them! It is a relief to hasten away from contemplations so painful, to the pleasant, cheering aspects of this Revival Movement. We have a positive duty in the case, and

not merely a negative one; a work less barren of earthly reward than it has hitherto been, and rich in everlasting fruit. And when we tremble at the thought of our unholiness and unfitness for the work of God, we are reminded by most affecting examples that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; and that the results are to be achieved, not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts. The King cometh to His temple and city to fill with glory His Father's house, and the hosannahs which welcome Him, and which are sweetest in His ear, may come from the lips of babes and sucklings. The truth is made most clearly known to us which we have the greatest need to learn, that when we are weak, we shall be strong; when we have nothing, all things shall be ours; when we are poor in spirit, we shall inherit the kingdom. A life emptied of self, and all for God; a life made bare of its human adornments, and invested with the graces of the Spirit; a life in which the man goes back to the docility and faith of the child, and in so doing becomes the nobler man; a life denying itself to the lusts of the world, and hungering for the living bread which came down from heaven; a life which turns unsatisfied from the shadows and mocking semblances of the sphere in which it moves, and casts far glances into the unseen; a life which journeys on in

darkness, lighted and cheered by tokens of the dayspring which it shall meet on the shores of the unknown sea. Such a life! Oh that it were ours in its beginnings, its growth, its maturity, its upreachings and forward reachings to the Infinite and Eternal, its worth and everlastingness! of which the words of an ancient and those also of a modern poet may be used in a higher sense than either poet gave them :—

Ὅτι καλὸν φίλον ἀεί.

'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.'

We seek this for ourselves as the only thing really worth the seeking; by a knowledge of Jesus as loving *us*, and giving Himself for *us*; by an indwelling of the Holy Spirit to renew and sanctify. But it is no selfish life, and in its strength and love we are constrained to pray and work that many more may be made partakers of it, that if God will it shall envelop with a holiness and blessedness before unknown this dying human world. Jesus and His Cross! the Spirit and His grace! that is enough—rich in godlike sufficiency to banish the sin and the suffering for evermore. Wrong and woe! Woe and wrong! the changes rung on these have burdened century after century of the history of the earth. Men have hunted down one phantom remedy after another, or have gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God that made them, while the Balm

of Gilead and the Physician that is there tarried long and patiently within their reach, unknown and unheeded. It seems as if the Holy Spirit in these days were flashing light through this fearful blindness, and the world were about to learn where to find a response to its cry at last. The burden hath lain, and is lying still, not on those only who have grown strong with years to bear it, but it has been a task set to one in this generation to write 'the cry of the children,' and to tell of the

> 'Child's sob cursing deeper in the silence,
> Than the strong man in his wrath.'

But now, assuredly, another record shall be written for these little ones, and it shall be the echo of the old words of Jesus, so familiar and so sweet, 'Of such is the kingdom of God.' And for all shall the same record be written, for the power of the enemy shall come to its end, when the King shall consume him with the breath of His mouth and the brightness of His coming. Oh, my brothers, shall we not set this end before us, and strive after it, ever more faithfully, hopefully, lovingly; willing to suffer all weariness, and trial, and death, if so be that the end be gained. 'And ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.'

III.

CRITICAL HEARERS.[1]

THE decay of the pulpit is a favourite theme of lamentation at present. But those who lament most loudly have a difficulty in showing wherein and how far it has decayed. It seems to me, that a good many of these mourning Jeremiahs are more like spoiled children than anything else—crying they know not for what. Perhaps, if it were understood where this popular lamentation began, it would be less popular than it is. I strongly suspect, nay, am well assured, that those who first set agoing this mourning over the decay of the pulpit, are the worst enemies of the pulpit, who would like nothing better than that it should cease to be. What they wish it were, they think and say that it is. It is only fair, to turn the tables a little on the complainers, and, leaving the decay of the pulpit alone for the present, to inquire whether there be not decay in the pews. Is it simply the awkward wooden box into which the minister climbs, perched up between heaven

[1] From the *Family Treasury*, 1864, p. 336.

and earth, which has grown dusty, and creaky, and old? Are not also those squares or oblongs, into which the people gather to listen, worm-eaten and tottering to their fall? For the change, if change there be, is the speaker only, and not the hearer too, to blame? When your child nauseates his dinner, and pronounces it like to sicken him, you are quick enough to see, that, to scold the cook and throw the rejected viands to the dog, is scarcely the right thing to do, but that strict investigations must be made into the amount of sweetmeats lately consumed by him, and the state of his little, ill-used stomach. There are two *Take heeds* in the Scripture, the one levelled at the pulpit, and the other at the pew—'Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine.' Ay, and 'Take heed *how you hear*.'

Sermons are the only work of human art and skill which everybody feels himself qualified to criticise. The humblest cobbler of shoes, in the matter of shoes and cobbling, is counted an authority, whose judgments are not to be lightly questioned, and, even when the shoe pinches, and the work which he has made is manifestly bad work, his customer ventures to point out the evil with much diffidence, and does not venture at all to suggest the remedy. A picture or a poem will draw forth expressions of delight or disapproval from the uninitiated public; but this same public

is at the same time humbly conscious of its ignorance, and, in the presence of an expert, will timorously refrain from committing itself to any remark, either good or bad. But it is far otherwise with preachers and preaching. Here Tozer the butterman, and Mary Jane of the broom and duster, feel themselves at home; and if you were to express a doubt of their capacity to estimate aright the productions of men more or less intelligent and educated, and these devoted to the setting forth of the highest truths in theology and the Bible, they would consider themselves insulted. I do not doubt that these excellent persons are qualified, and indeed bound, to say whether such and such a discourse be level to their comprehension, and be otherwise fitted to interest them and advance their spiritual wellbeing. But they make themselves the measure of all human intelligence, and from behind the counter, or over the dust-pan, pronounce this or that preacher, this or that discourse, to be good or bad, clever or stupid, edifying or profitless, in the most absolute sense, and for everybody. And so, when Tozer, and Mary Jane, and the Joneses round the corner, differ in opinion, it is a conflict of absolutes, which, as metaphysicians know, cannot possibly exist together, and the consequence often is the most bitter mutual dissension known among men.

It was this very evil, which St. Paul had so

much trouble about in the case of the Corinthian Christians. Some of the people were attached to his ministry, and some to that of Apollos, and some to that of Peter, and, as usual, they all supposed their opinions to be contradictory and mutually exclusive; in consequence of which there were evidently ugly scenes in that infant church. The follower of Paul regarded himself as bound to abuse and traduce Apollos and Peter, and, from their followers, received a due return of the compliment which he paid them. Imagine an admirer of the great Apostle of the Gentiles meeting an Apollosite, immediately after the news had come that Paul had arrived in Corinth, and with much importunity insisting that he should attend to hear his favourite preach. The reply which he would get would be something like this—the scene, of course, being Corinth,—the time, in the first century,—and the language, Greek. 'Catch me going to hear that little bleareyed man, with his twisted talk, about Adam's sin, and the law, and the righteousness of faith. He is no speaker at all. And then, he is so terribly long-winded, as if he would never have done, that, they say, his hearers fall asleep, and tumble off awkward places, and get their necks broken. Apollos is the man for me. There you will see what eloquence and culture are, and being up with the age!' Then would break in some

orthodox churchman and admirer of the Apostle Peter, and fall foul of Paul and Apollos, the doctrinal teacher and the philosopher both, and argument, or assertion at least, would wax high and hot among the three. It seems to me, that Paul's reproof of this spirit of criticism and self-conceit is one of the grandest things in the Bible. Every Christian, he says, has all the gifts and graces of the Church laid at his feet. A feast of many viands is spread for him. Will he starve in the midst of plenty? In the garden of God with its innumerable flowers, will he shut his eyes to all but one? Will he measure God's great and manifold kingdom by his own narrow heart? 'Let no man glory in men. For all things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.'

Criticism, as a name for the kind of judgments which the bulk of hearers pronounce on the sermons which they hear, is a ludicrous misnomer. Mrs. Malaprop, an eminent member of the church, no matter where, is styled by her friends 'a great critic.' When we hear these words, we naturally think of Francis Jeffrey, or Lord Macaulay, or Thomas Carlyle, and the descent which we have to make from them to Mrs. Malaprop is a somewhat startling one. Her criticisms, we find on

inquiry, consist in a silent toss of her head, meaning something too awful for utterance, or in ungrammatical remarks of a bitter nature, on the sermons or rather the preachers whom she happens to hear. What does duty for the critical faculty in her case, is simply a more than ordinary degree of ignorance and presumption. Criticism, in the world of literature, means the application, by one man to the work of another, of certain ascertained principles of truth, and beauty, and fitness, and such meed of praise or blame as may turn out to be fairly merited. Criticism, in the theological world, has a yet higher meaning, for it is used to signify, in this country if not in Germany, a reverent examination of the form and outward manner more especially of the Word of God. To make it mean mere fault-finding is bad enough. And to make it mean the fault-finding of an utterly ignorant and presumptuous person, is surely atrocious.

Far be it from me to insist on taking preachers and sermons out of the domain of criticism in its legitimate sense. The place which the pulpit holds is so high, and its influence so momentous, that it is to be tried by very lofty standards; and if it fall short of them, its guilt, and the evil which it does, must needs be very great. But, for any deliverance of opinion on the part of the hearer, beyond his saying what he must feel more

or less keenly, that the discourse which he has just heard was precious to his soul, or else that he failed to profit by it, I would be disposed to require a certain knowledge of the subjects treated of, and of the best ways of dealing with them, a certain taste and discrimination, which very few possess. No doubt, most critics of sermons assume that they really possess this. A dissatisfied hearer goes home to his dinner grumbling, and saying that he could have preached a better sermon himself. He himself means nothing more than to use a hyperbole; and the thought in the minds of his audience would be an uncomfortable one for him if he knew it, for they say quietly to themselves, that, if that be the case, the sermon must indeed have been inconceivably bad. Still, I do not deny that it is possible to find those who, by the sermon-hearing of a pretty long life, and having given to the whole matter a very large measure of interest and attention, have escaped from the crudity of their earlier judgments, and are able to be, in a way which makes everything they say worth considering, in the very best sense of the word, critical hearers.

All this that I have said, goes merely the length of putting sermons on a level with other literary productions or utterances of the minds of men. It cannot be denied that they have peculiar sanctions attached to them, and that they require a peculiar receptivity in those who would profit by them;

all this being due, not to anything in the preacher, but to their solemn theme. In this view of the matter, the critical hearer had better bethink himself. If the words which he hears be not to him as cold water to a thirsty soul, he may, in proclaiming this, proclaim his own condemnation. I once knew an aged man, who had been an eager listener in the churches all his days, and is now in the courts of God's house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, who used to discourse at length on the subject of sermon-hearing, and to say, that every hearer had need to have not only a minister preaching in the pulpit, but a minister preaching in his own heart. I suppose he meant an awakened spirit, conscious of its wants, and hungering for the mercy of God. He was right, most certainly. And when men complain of something wanting, where the truth concerning Christ and His salvation is unquestionably preached, one cannot help wondering, whether it be not like a deaf man complaining that the people around him speak in whispers, or one whose eyes are jaundiced complaining of the livid huelessness of the earth and sky. A listening heart can hear the voice of God through the dullest sermon, if it speak at all of sin and Christ. The washiest preaching I ever listened to was in an English chapel in a town on the Continent; and yet, in the strange land, amidst the purely ritual worship of the Roman Church, its vapid sentences dropped

like the dew. It is a principle, true in the case of every ordinance of God, that the meek eat and are satisfied, that the hungry are filled with good things, while the rich are sent empty away. My friend, who art possessed with a critical devil, or with seven of them, as is the case with many at this day, pray that he be cast out, and try sitting at the preacher's feet, as for the time the feet of Jesus, in what is the right mind for a poor and needy sinner, and see what the result will be. The outlines which looked so dim and grey will fill out to forms of heavenly beauty; the sounds far-heard will swell to deep-toned music; the holy words, which seemed so bald and cold, will take an infinite meaning and a tenderness as of the Man of Sorrows Himself; and, having tasted the sweetness of being as a little child, you will scarcely wish to put on the philosopher's cloak, and welcome the sneering Mephistopheles, whom you have banished, back to your heart again.

In a certain city not unknown to this writer, as to many people besides, it is considered a necessary part of the education of every enlightened church member, to be able to criticise preachers and preaching, to discriminate between different styles, and to give each man or each discourse its own place and value. The consequences are disastrous for all parties concerned. One says, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; and another, I am of Cephas; and,

though without the old acrimony and quarrelsomeness, the spirit of the Corinthian Church lives again in the ecclesiastical world of this modern city. The excellent Mr. Simpkins has been known to come to the church-door with his wife on his arm, and, finding that the minister whom he came to hear was not to preach on that occasion, to turn away he cares not whither—away, at any rate, from the scene of his disappointment and the sanctuary, where the worship of God has become impossible to him for that day at least. It is alleged also, that some of the churches are besieged, shortly before the service begins, with crowds of people, demanding to know what is to be the bill of fare on that forenoon or afternoon, before they will part with their pennies by putting them in the collection-plate. Surely this is woful. Surely there is something miserably wrong in a system which makes preaching and the individual preacher everything, and the house of God itself, and the ascending incense of praise and prayer, yea, the very truth that is preached, nothing at all. Members of the Church of England have their laugh at Presbyterians and Independents here, and fairly too. After all, however, give me rather the quick, keen criticism, which implies interest and awakened intelligence, than the sodden satisfaction of listless hearers, to whom it is all one who preaches and what is preached, because they neither understand nor care.

IV.

ROBBING PETER TO PAY PAUL.[1]

I FORGET which of the two apostles it was that was the robber, and which the robbed, but it matters little, for the meaning of the proverb is plain enough. It comes to one's mind not seldom, at present, as a very apt expression of a certain error, or sin rather, into which men fall when they are engaged in the service of the Great Master. Both the robbed and the robber have received their *arles-penny* from His hand, and, in the very act of injuring each other, are with heart and might endeavouring, as they think at least, to glorify Him. 'Robbing Peter to pay Paul' is a quaint way of designating what might otherwise be called—the rivalries of Christian work.

That Christian work should be so abundant and so popular as to make this sort of jealousy and mutual injury possible, is certainly a thing to be thankful for. The time was, when Christian

[1] From the *Family Treasury*, 1865, p. 411.

workers were so thinly sown that they could not by any possibility come into collision with each other—when they were too far off to measure their stature, and gratefully exchanged sympathetic communications, like separate gardens that overarch with fragrance the flowerless land between them. That time is past, and almost all the world is within the garden-walls, and in every corner of it the rose, the lily, and the violet exhale their perfume. But I do not wish to be poetical just at present, and shall add to this a homelier and more definite illustration. The village of St. Mary is a very pretty village, in the shadow of its ancient church, round which the trees droop their branches over the rude tombstones of ever so many generations, and beside its brook which babbles to the same old tune, and fills the ducks and the children with delight, as it did of yore. This village long had its one grocer's shop, where everything was sold, from schoolboys' satchels to halfpenny butter-biscuits, and it thought as little of having another, as it did of a new smithy instead of the one that clanked by the roadside and looked uncomfortably hot in the blazing summer noon, or of finding the rasping sound of sawing wood come from the one end of the village as it had come from time immemorial from the other. But times are changed. A manufactory has begun to whirr and smoke close

by, and has doubled the population of the district almost in a day. And Mrs. Morrison, the respected shopkeeper of the village, is horrified to find a new shop, with glaring sign, and front all window together, throwing her own into the shade, with a bowing and scraping young gentleman from the neighbouring town of Drumble behind the counter. The evil spirit of competition enters at once into the mercantile mind of St. Mary. Mrs. M., if her old heart do not break under the unaccustomed pressure, must take to politeness and plate-glass and the newest ideas from London or Edinburgh; and there is a hot race between the rival establishments, in the matter of the best and cheapest soap and sugar and congou.

In the church, or the churches I should rather say—in the Lord's work—the spirit of competition has made its appearance. When many are working, to work most and fastest becomes an enviable distinction. Peter and Paul are not so poor as they used to be, and, having in their purses sums of money represented by several ciphers with an integer preceding, begin to measure incomes with each other; nay, the one is disparaged or even actually despoiled that the other may have the pre-eminence. Christians have been told 'to provoke one another unto love and unto good works.' That is true, but *provoke* is a misleading word. It

means to call forth and stir up in our neighbour a corresponding activity to our own—hot and sharp maybe, a very *paroxysm*, as the Greek has it; but this by humble, tender, simple-hearted words and deeds, and not certainly by doing or saying something ungracious—by ascending our own house-roof, like an exultant chanticleer, and from the topmost peak of it giving utterance to an unmitigated and offensive crow. The man who says in articulate speech or otherwise—'Look at me: I am holier than thou!' may be speaking the truth, and showing a good example, but surely in a very unfortunate way. And the spirit of rivalry, not perhaps a very bad thing in itself, never fails to be seen in certain combinations which make it one of the least lovely features of the Church of Christ at the present day.

In a certain country, of course very distant from this one—let us say Kamtschatka—and in its capital city, the different churches hold their annual assemblies about or at the same time. Attracted by a very great blowing of trumpets in or near the market-place, you make your way through the crowd to see what all this can mean. And you find that the religious bodies of that country are shaking their annual money-bags and emitting their testimonies against each other. 'I have so much—how much have you? I have so

many thousands of pounds, so many new churches, so many ministers and congregations! Hurrah!' Something of this kind must be done if Churches are to have a definite principle and a distinct organization, but surely the way in which it is done is somewhat objectionable. I do not mean that any such unbecoming language is ever employed. I have taken a short cut of my own to the meaning of the reverend orators, for which I am alone responsible. It has occurred to this writer, that possibly there is a mixture of the ancient pugnacity of the people of that country in all this intensity of zeal; and that the spirit of the descendants of those who fought for the crown of the causeway, while shouts of 'A Leslie!' 'A Seton!' resounded from the high-built tenements on either side, and hard knocks were given and taken, and skulls were cracked notwithstanding their thickness, may be more or less, in different fields and in less boisterous warfare, a repetition of that of their fathers. Seriously, the Churches are bound to examine themselves before God, and see whether, in contending for their distinctive principles, in pushing on their own especial operations, and in reporting progress that the past may afford encouragement for the future, they have not slid sometimes into an ugly and mischievous self-laudation.

Ecclesiastical rivalry on the great scale leads

inevitably to ecclesiastical rivalry on the small. Congregations of different denominations, nay, congregations of the same denomination, try hard sometimes to outrun each other, to rise on the ruins of each other. In the same distant country, it was made, at one time, in certain religious bodies, the chief end of a minister of God's word to 'gather,' as the phrase was, a congregation. There is a kind of gathering which is a very noble and Christlike work. The servants of the King, who were sent out to the highways and the hedges to compel the people to come in, did certainly gather a congregation. And there is ever in the world, a sunken, reckless mass of humanity out of which the Good Shepherd's sheep, God's precious jewels, are to be anxiously gathered for the fold and for the glorious crown of Immanuel. And there are unfaithful shepherds also, who neither feed their flock nor guard them from the wolf, from whose soul-ruining pastorate it is well that the sheep should be wiled away, by the attraction of spiritual warmth and evangelic life. That is not the only sense, however, in which the gathering of a congregation has been sometimes understood. The gathering minister has empty pews to fill, a ruined congregational finance to build up, for the latter of which purposes at least, the outside heathen, though collected in considerable numbers, would scarcely

avail. He must preach his very best then—make the most of the excellence and attractiveness of his wares. Perhaps the striking out of a new path in theology may help to attract the more volatile hearers of his sober and orthodox brethren; perhaps the introduction of a musical instrument, where there used to be none, may prove an allurement; perhaps assiduous and skilful advertising, and sermons by the Rev. Dr. Mellifluens, that eminent preacher from the *Ant*arctic zone. I do not mean to pronounce any opinion on the use of such attractions, to approve or condemn them. Nor do I doubt for a moment the advantage of a wholesome rivalry, prompting the use of every means to make the preaching of the Gospel tell, and to surround pulpit and pew with a halo of interest. I have only to suggest, that perhaps this clerical and congregational emulation may go too far, and that, for the sake of the things which bring popularity and a rush of outward success, the great, nay, the only ends of a faithful ministry may fall into shade. An indignant Christian public, tormented by the restless activities of proselytizing separatists, who are never to be found among the ungodly and careless, but vex anxious inquirers or tender-godly souls with their eager ministrations, has invented for them the name *sheep-stealers*, to distinguish them from the divine Shepherd and the human shepherds, who,

not in the quiet fold, but on lone mountain and moor, seek for that which is lost until they find it.

Consistent with all this, and springing from the same root, are the rivalries of individual Christians in the matter even of the graces of Christian character. Martha and Mary have still considerable difficulty in understanding and tolerating each other. A busy Christian thinks his meditative neighbour indolent or lukewarm; and is repaid in his own coin by being deemed fussy and shallow. The heavenward traveller accustomed to nothing but sunshine gently hints to the heavy-laden souls whom he skips past on the road, that they are still in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity; while they say quietly to themselves, when they have recovered from the painful self-accusations which his confident speeches caused, that he carries his head a little too high, and had better ponder the case of St. Peter, and consider how *he* felt when the cock crew the second time. No doubt there are greater and less in Christ's house and kingdom; but it is not the guests themselves who are permitted to say whether they are to sit in the highest or lowest room. When holy Paul let his very heart of hearts out, in that sudden appendix to the faithful saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—'of whom I am chief!'

the less any of us have to say about our attainments and characteristic graces the better. One has heard lately of well-meaning preachers, who prefaced their discourses with the information, that they were babes in Christ of three years or perhaps even three months old, and went on to speak, not only of the way of salvation, but of the shortcomings and defects of older Christians, with a confidence very astonishing in babes of that age. Is it irreverent to say, that there is a spiritual hobbledehoyhood, which occasionally makes itself intolerable by its assumption, and which, amidst larger experience of the ways of God, through heats of conflict and waves of tribulation, has yet to grow to the quiet strength and completed stature of a perfect man? One needs to know only a little of the people of God to find that the types of Christian life—while God's way of peace is but one way—are infinitely varied; that in the spiritual kingdom, as in the great nature-kingdoms, forms of use and beauty are lavished by Him in countless multitude out of His inexhaustible resources. In all material things, from the tiny blades of the meadow herbage to the golden dust of stars on the celestial floor, you find this manifoldness. And it would be strange indeed, if, in the world of grace alone, there were a hard uniformity, a unity in *kind* of such a sort that the difference of *degree* could be reckoned up, like the

difference between one mile and two, of a road, or between the stature of one man and the stature of another. I decline to compare, in a painful manner, the respective beauties of a flower and a star, the respective grandeurs of rolling thunders and rushing Niagaras; and I would, that all the children of the Father in heaven hailed with joy and sympathy, wheresoever they beheld it, their common likeness to Him; and, forbearing to chide with or disparage one another, left it to Him to say, who serves Him best while all serve well, who shall wear the brightest crown where there are crowns for the brows of all.

V.

MR. ROBERTSON OF BRIGHTON.[1]

THE peculiar mental unrest of the present time has brought it about, that, of all histories which can be written and read, the most interesting, to many classes of the community, is a mental history. In the midst of its thousandfold material activities, the thoughtful mind of the age—it might almost be said, its thoughtless mind as well—is feverishly alive to all the problems of inward life. The work done, the battles fought, the suffering endured, in the invisible domain of human hearts, have been found to possess often a great and tragic interest. There will be differences of mental histories, of course, as there are differences of minds. The toil and trial of inward life, like the toil and trial which have been seen and known of men, will be, in one case and in another, of lesser or of mightier import. Many spiritual histories laboriously portrayed, turn out to be without individuality and freshness, and the

[1] From the *Sunday Magazine*, 1866, p. 313.

record of them is made up of disappointing commonplaces, every one of which we seem to have heard a hundred times before. There are higher and meaner among the souls whom God has made; and, within as well as without, the one will be found to have lived the higher, more eventful, more significant, and the other the meaner, more eventless, more insignificant, life. In the case of the latter, the question of personal salvation will generally be found the only one which they have been much concerned to settle; in the case of the former, the foundations of the stable earth have been shaken, and solemn problems have risen up, spectre-like, and moved across their field of vision—problems of Law and Love and Life—of Humanity and God.

The Life of Mr. Robertson of Brighton, which is now before us, is a mental history of this latter sort. The facts of his career in the world are few. Not only, however, as framework for his inward history, but also because of their vital connexion with it—the action and reaction of the external and internal—they are of the utmost moment. But it is what *he thought and felt*, and, so thinking and feeling, spoke and wrote, that enchains our interest. In the latter part of his lifetime, the attention of men began to be directed to him—of men far beyond the circle of those who had his voice and presence in the

midst of them. But it was after his death, when his sermons were issued from the press in a collected form, and the words which had been addressed to sympathetic or unsympathetic hearers in Trinity Chapel, Brighton, found their way to the ear of the great world, delighting or startling, reading the thoughts or enkindling the hearts of many in distant places, that the question, 'Who and what manner of man was this?' began to be commonly asked; till at length an answer has been supplied to it, in the biography of Mr. Brook, more or less satisfactory. A copy of the first volume of these sermons, published in 1864, now lies before me, and is marked, 'Thirteenth Edition.' A very large amount of buying and reading, in the case of this book at least, is indicated by the prosaic announcement. To many, through these sermons, Mr. Robertson has become, not a voice only, but a living and breathing presence. It is too plain that he poured out his inmost soul in them; that they are written often as with blood from his own heart. From some of their doctrinal statements we strongly and unequivocally differ, less however in the way of attributing to them positive error than of lamenting their defectiveness. The propositions which he maintains are mostly true in the full sense which he gives them; but his great error seems to lie in excluding other important propo-

sitions that ought to be at their side, as if they were utterly inconsistent with them. When he thinks himself broadest he is often narrowest, fixing his eye with its microscopic or telescopic intensity of sight, on some one aspect or corner of truth, and disclosing it as in a sunshine gleam, or perhaps lightning-flash; but then, unhappily, seeming to claim for a part the place of the whole, for his own particular illustration of the truth the credit of being the truth itself in its widest and deepest form. In most cases, if not in all, the evangelical theology which he stigmatized as hopelessly narrow, if rightly and comprehensively presented would include all that was true in his views, and something more. It was his special faculty, and perhaps his mission, to set forth, in vivid illustration and unchallengeable certainty, the humanity of the Redeemer's Person and of His Cross—the humanity of the Bible and the Christian faith and life, in an age that needed such teaching. The friends of catholic evangelical doctrine will thank him for that, while they will be disposed to mourn over the intellectual presumption which supposed itself to be conquering the new when it was simply coming into living contact with the old, and which mistook the narrower for the broader truth. Narrow men—men whose life is built on a few great thoughts, is devoted to one grand

aspect of doctrine or duty—are intense, vital, suggestive, in proportion to their narrowness. You must meet them on their own ground; and there you find them in thought, or speech, or action, giants. The catholic doctrine of the Church, and still more the Holy Scriptures, from which it is drawn, by their very breadth and tolerance, put to shame the exclusive spirit in which such men are often criticised. The Bible has its Antinomies—Law and Love, Predestination and Free-will, Faith and Work; the creeds of the Church have left these where the Bible sets them, side by side; their practical reconciliation ever found in actual human history, their theoretical reconciliation hidden in the vastness of God.

London was the birthplace of Mr. Robertson. He was born there on the 3d of February 1816. But the first five years of his life were spent at Leith Fort, where his father, then a captain in the Royal Artillery, was on duty. This early period left on his susceptible mind its own especial impress. As is usual with children, the mist-curtain which hid the beginnings of his life had breaks of azure in it. He remembered certain outstanding scenes and events; the rest passed out of his conscious life altogether. The sea in these early days awakened in him an affection which never died; and its fresh breezes

blowing inland, across Inchkeith, or from the grey distance out of which the ships came one by one, seemed, in the dreams of after-days, to stir his hair again, and sprinkle his face with spray. At the end of these five years his father resigned his commission, and removed to Beverley in Yorkshire, where the education of Frederick, his eldest son, was carried on, partly at home under his own superintendence, and partly at the grammar-school of the place, for the next eight years. Thereafter, in 1829, the family removed to Tours, where Mr. Robertson acquired his thorough knowledge of the French language. The Revolution of 1830 drove them to this country again, and this time young Robertson was sent to school in Edinburgh. This strangely desultory mode of education, which I have not yet fully described, had no doubt its effect in shaping the mental tastes and habits of Frederick Robertson to what they afterwards became. He was a man evidently of very varied culture, furnished, as few men are, with manifold personal knowledge of the world and of mankind, but making up in freshness and variety for what he lacked in accuracy and depth. His father was a soldier; all his younger brothers, in one way or another, gave themselves to a military life; and one can, therefore, imagine how, in the household of Captain Robertson, would be nursed the frank, daring, chivalrous spirit which had such

a battle before it, harder to face sometimes than a storm of shot and shell. He was already dreamy and sensitive, full of the imaginings of noblest boyhood, and yet also of healthy physical development, and passionately fond of every kind of boyish activity, building up the slight but lithe thews and sinews of a frame which was yet too fragile for the fiery soul within it, and was worn to death prematurely, avenging itself of the spirit that wore down and wasted it, by the infliction of maddening pain.

At the Edinburgh Academy, Frederick Robertson devoted himself to his work with characteristic ardour; and, though labouring under the disadvantage of having pursued his earlier studies elsewhere, he seems, if I understand his biographer aright, to have stood second dux of the school at the end of the year. The following year was spent at the Edinburgh University, under the care of Bishop Terrot. No memorials remain of his attendance at any of the classes, except that of natural history, then taught by Professor Jameson; but his name may be found, perhaps, in the roll-book of some of the others for the session of 1832-33. He left Edinburgh to become the articled clerk of Mr. Borton, a solicitor at Bury St. Edmunds. A year at Mr. Borton's desk was enough for him; and his father gave him leave to follow out the purpose which he had been cherish-

ing through all his previous life—to become a soldier. An application was made to the Horse Guards for a commission. His name was placed on the list for a cavalry regiment then serving in India. Meanwhile, at Chatham with his brother, or in Cheltenham, where the family now resided, he anxiously prepared himself for a military life. His culture was still of the same healthy and comprehensive sort, physical as well as mental. He studied engineering, became a skilful draughtsman, read much and deeply in the history of India, its wars, even its missions, trying to solve the problem of its connexion with this country and its future destiny; and at the same time spent much time in riding and shooting, till he became a great proficient in both. Two years thus passed, but there was no sign of his commission, and his heart grew sick with hope deferred. He was now twenty years of age, and impatient to feel himself engaged in the work of his life.

At last, in the beginning of 1837, under the influence of Mr. Davies, now Vicar of Tewkesbury, and others, he was led to reconsider his determination to be a soldier, and to decide for the Church instead. This was done, however, very much in deference to the wish of his father and his friends; and if it had been delayed a little longer, would never have been done at all.

On May 4, 1837, he matriculated at Brazenose College, Oxford. The die was cast. Only a fortnight afterwards, news came of the long-expected commission, but, with much regret, the offer of it was now declined. On the receipt of this letter a few days later, or a few days earlier, the shape which his career should take depended, in the providence of God. The relation which he has come to hold to thousands of his fellow-men was thus determined, much against his wish and hope. It were folly not to see the Divine Hand in this, and to hold, as we shall have to hold throughout, that God mixed for Mr. Robertson the cup which he had to drink.

The next three years were spent in Oxford, till, in 1840, he took his degree, and his academic training, at least, was completed. He found Oxford the scene of great intellectual activity—rent especially by theological dissensions, so that, during these years, much of his time was given to the study of doctrinal and ecclesiastical questions. The man whose name was in all men's mouths, and about whom there went on a constant turmoil of discussion, was the Vicar of St. Mary's, John Henry Newman. He excited a deep interest in the mind of Frederick Robertson, won his affection as well as admiration—for Newman's sermons were chosen and beloved companions to the end of his life,—by the glow of his genius and

the nobleness of his earnest and devoted spirit; but, at the same time, repelled, by his ascetic and idealizing temper, Robertson's broader humanity. We find him write even bitterly of the Tracts and the Tractarian school; his bitterness, however, being the bitterness of a heart which is not at rest, but which hides, beneath its argument and denunciation, the pain of a secret love. The system, though he tried to regard it ever so favourably, repelled him; the men, in spite of himself, he was forced to hold in the highest honour. It is always hard, for an enthusiastic, sympathetic spirit like his, to distinguish between doctrinal belief and personal character, between the truth or untruth of the principle, and the truth or untruth of the lives of those who maintain it. This characteristic I believe to appear also in his later relations to the Evangelical party, and to be indeed, in a great measure, the key to his career.

During this period, Mr. Robertson kept his own heart with a singular care. He was a man of prayer. He set on foot a society for prayer and conversation on the Scriptures. His Bible was ever within his reach. He had a very accurate memory, and turned it to good account, by committing to it daily some verses of the New Testament. Before very long, he had gone twice through the English version, and once and a half

through the Greek. All this was done partly out of antagonism to the Tractarian school, but it endowed him with an accurate knowledge of Scripture which was of the greatest value to him in his future life. And yet, while not ashamed of Christ, while living thus in continual contact with the Divine Word, he delighted in his classical studies: Plato, especially, was a friend and counsellor. 'One of the poets,' he calls him in after years, 'who, when his brain was throbbing, and his mind incapable of originating a thought, and his body worn and sore with exhaustion, made him know what it was, to feel the jar of nerve gradually cease, and the darkness in which all life had robed itself to the imagination become light, discord pass into harmony, and physical exhaustion rise by degrees into the consciousness of power.' One other reminiscence of Robertson at Oxford. He was a member of the Union Debating Club, and Mr. Davies tells how, the second time he had attempted to speak, he opened a discussion on the question of the moral or immoral tendency of the theatre. Robertson's speech was on the stricter side. Before getting up to make it, he pressed his friend's knee and whispered, 'Davies, pray for me!' His opponent was one John Ruskin, of whom men have since heard, and who in his reply was very witty and clever at Robertson's expense.

At this period, Mr. Robertson bore all the marks of a genuine piety. But it was of a very spontaneous and child-like sort. His feet had not yet felt the chill of the deep waters through which he was to pass. The tender charms of early association bound him: the dreams of boyhood had scarcely faded. He followed and sought to realize a high ideal of chivalrousness, of faith and courtesy. He was a born soldier: but in the preparation for his clerical life, and in that life itself, this character of his had field enough for its display; for there is another warfare than that of camps and armies, and blood-red battle-fields. He longed to be a Vindicator of the Right, and Avenger of the Wrong. Consistent with this, and from the same root, was his devotion to his ideal of womanhood. The gentler sex had an immense power over his mind, because he saw in them what he deemed the highest attributes of human being,—a fact which they do not seem to have been aware of, and which they used for the most part only to wound and thwart him. 'At seven years old,' he says, 'woman was a sacred dream, of which I would not talk. Marriage was degradation. I remember being quite angry on hearing it said of a lovely Swede—the loveliest being I ever saw—that she was likely to get married in England. She gave me her hair, lines, books, and I worshipped her only as I should

have done a living rainbow, with no further feeling. Yet I was then eighteen, and she was to me for years nothing more than a calm, clear, untroubled fiord of beauty, glassing heaven, deep, deep below, so deep that I never dreamed of an attempt to reach the heaven. So I lived. I may truly say that my heart was like the Rhone as it leaves the Lake of Geneva.' 'I have seen him,' writes one of his friends, 'grind his teeth and clench his fist when passing a man who, he knew, was bent on destroying an innocent girl.' 'My blood,' he writes himself, after a conversation on the wrongs of women, 'was running liquid fire!' This ideal, then, which he cherished, of manhood and of womanhood, explains much in his teaching, and much in his personal life. It was this which made him so impatient of the harshness and pettiness which he encountered: which gave his life its character of peculiar isolation: which made his attachments so sudden and strong, and his reactions so violent: which drove him from actual men and women, to find in Christ the truest characteristics of manhood and womanhood too, and to lavish the wealth of his love on the God-man Redeemer, stronger than the strongest, and tenderer than the tenderest of all. In many sermons, besides that especial one on the Glory of the Virgin-mother, he shows the ideal, which he had never found even partially realized on earth,

to have its eternal realization in the Man Christ Jesus.

On Sunday, July 12th, 1840, he was ordained a deacon by the Bishop of Winchester. He had received a title from Mr. Nicholson, rector of the united parishes of St. Maurice, St. Mary Kalendar, and St. Peter Colebrook, Winchester. Mr. Nicholson was an earnest Evangelical, and, for a busy year, Mr. Robertson and he worked to each other's hands in much brotherly love, and with apostolic devotion. It is curious to note how well the Bishop and Mr. Nicholson understood their man, for the latter preached the ordination sermon from the same text which the former gave Mr. Robertson as a motto for his future life; it was 2 Tim. ii. 3, 'Thou therefore endure hardness, as *a good soldier* of Jesus Christ.' The parishes were inhabited by a poor population, and during the incumbency of Mr. Nicholson's predecessor had been almost wholly neglected. But times had changed. The rector and his curate were obliged in a few months to open two churches instead of one, and both were crowded. Mr. Robertson's ministry was greatly blessed, more than he knew till long afterwards. He was as Evangelical as his rector. His texts on his first three Sundays were Isaiah lv. 1, Isaiah lvii. 15, and these words (John i. 42) which make Andrew a type of truest and highest brotherly-kindness, 'And he brought

him to Jesus.' Here in Winchester his labours were incessant, and of the humblest and most self-denying kind. Meanwhile, he strengthened his intellectual grasp of the truth by the thorough study of President Edwards, kept the edge of his spirit keen by much holy meditation with the help of 'The Imitation of Christ;' and drew his impulse and his power from frequent solitary prayer. Yet was he possessed in some measure by a spirit of bondage and fear. He spent much time in mere self-dissection. There is a freer Christian life than he yet had, which harmonizes work for God with communion with Him, which looks less in on self, and more out on Christ and on the world for which Christ died. To this, with all his doctrinal defectiveness, he seems to have attained afterwards in fuller measure, when the pain and strife were past.

Too intense and consuming labour produced ill health, and after but one year of work in Winchester, he was ordered abroad by the physicians. Before setting out, he was invested with priest's orders. He travelled on foot through many parts of the Continent, storing his mind with all grand and beautiful imagery, revelling in the glory of Nature, and the aspects of strange cities and men. Yet he never forgot his work of winning souls for his Master. There is a touching story of a young Prussian of Elberfeld, with whom he travelled on

one occasion, and whose views were of the most sceptical kind. After much argument, Mr. Robertson simply told him in plain words, what was his own conviction, belief, and hope. The young man, unconvinced by argument, was melted before the reality of truth. '*C'est une belle croyance,*' he said; 'I wish that I could believe it too!' In Geneva, Mr. Robertson remained for a considerable time, meeting there both the Evangelicals and their opponents. He was delighted with Malan and Merle d'Aubigné. The well-known views of the former on the assurance of faith startled him, and suggested profitable thoughts, but did not win his assent. In Geneva, he met, and shortly after married, Miss Helen Denys, third daughter of Sir George William Denys, Bart., of Easton Neston, Northamptonshire. She survives her husband. Returning to England with his bride, he took farewell of his flock at Winchester, and after a month or two of enforced idleness, accepted the curacy of Christ-church, Cheltenham. This was in the summer of 1842.

Cheltenham was to be the scene of his labours for the next five years. In some respects this period was the most important of all, the turning-point of his life. But that life was now turned violently aside from the path which it had hitherto followed, and involved in the over-shadowing gloom both of error and of sorrow.

Three children were born to him in this period, one to be taken as it had been given, very soon. He passed through the usual routine of a clergyman's life, with its monotony, and yet wondrous variety, of work. It is in his relations to the people around him, and the effect which outward circumstances had on his inner spirit, that the interest of this Cheltenham period entirely lies. The incumbent of Christ-church was the Rev. Archibald Boyd, now of London, an able preacher and stanch Evangelical. Mr. Robertson, of course, ranked with the party to which Mr. Boyd belonged. His admiration for Mr. Boyd was intense, and their friendship warm, till growing divergence of doctrinal teaching introduced embarrassment. The influence of the incumbent on his curate was stimulating and yet also depressing. It impelled Mr. Robertson to more careful and matured preparation for the pulpit, but led him also to make comparisons most disadvantageous to himself. The Cheltenham public, with which Mr. Robertson came into contact, was of that fashionable and somewhat idle sort which could not understand him, and which provoked him to anger and impatience. Amidst the active thought and work of the day, amidst scholars and thinkers, amidst merchants and artisans, he would have struck fire at once. He found himself in the midst of a peculiar society, with many characteristic excel-

lencies, but broken up into little sects and parties; Tractarianism and Evangelicalism being the most popular watchwords. He was one of those persistently original men who must think their own thoughts and speak their own words, or else neither think nor speak. He could belong to no party, being charged with the work of hewing out new paths of thought, which might be marked with milestones afterwards, and made distinctive tenets of by others, though he meant nothing of the kind. The comforts of partisanship, the sympathy of friends and backers, the good things which the chiefs of the party can bestow, when it is in power at least, were not for him. To many of his hearers his mode of expression was strange —nay, were not his views also strange, and, being strange, of necessity dangerous? They tried first to enlighten his own mind. They gave him on Monday mornings their opinion of the sermon of the previous day somewhat plainly. On one occasion he had pronounced this world in itself a riddle, but had commended the Christian religion as the key to that riddle. The next day an anonymous lady-correspondent, who must have been asleep during the latter part of the discourse, informed him that Christianity made all the difficulties he spoke of plain. He smarted under such interference, but otherwise he gave no heed to it. He called these wise ladies his 'muslin

episcopate.' He was, in short, incorrigible. Then they began to let their opinion of him be known. I have said enough before to show that to Mr. Robertson all this must have been almost intolerably painful. As his Evangelical friends drew off, friends of a different stamp gathered around him. A certain philosophic inquirer, a student of Coleridge and the Germans, accorded him the sympathy which was elsewhere denied; but such a one might supply him with intellectual stimulus, but could not give the needed guidance towards settled truth. In the case of an inquirer, the influence of a fellow-inquirer is perhaps the greatest; the influence of one who has through pain and struggle won his way to rest is next; the influence of an altogether settled and untroubled dogmatist, given to didactic monologue, is simply nothing at all. Mr. Robertson's spirit was wounded deeply, and a wounded spirit who can bear?

Yet let us not blame too much the people of Cheltenham. The devotedness and purity of Mr. Robertson's Christian character might have made them more patient and considerate, but there were undoubtedly very strong grounds for anxiety and perplexity. Mr. Robertson's teaching, at this point, was the teaching of one who was feeling his way, not indeed to new truths, but to a new and more living relation to the old. It lacked

that roundness and scriptural fulness which they had good reason to love. Unsettled himself, it was not desirable that he should be permitted to unsettle them. Their feet were planted on a rock; they had no wish to tempt the seething surges; the man who would plunge them into these would, they felt, do them a cruel wrong. Ill health came again and deep despondency; and in 1846, Mr. Robertson had left Cheltenham never to resume his labours there.

He went back to the Continent, to travel alone in the Tyrol, to go chamois-hunting in its mountain solitudes, to do anything and everything to escape from the unquiet of his spirit. The Evangelicals had cast him off: the narrowness, as it seemed to him, of the Evangelical theology and life, of which he had formed a wrong conception, caused a revulsion of feeling all the more intense and agitating, that he was still hiddenly drawn to both. One cannot help thinking, that, if he had met at this stage with some humble, faithful, and not untried believer, his course might have been different. His heart cried in its anguish for sympathy, and found no more reply from other hearts than it did from the crags of the mountains, from the serpentine mists, from the vast silences of heaven, from the changing skies of sunset or of dawn. If he had had the true theology before him in its Biblical fulness, he would have found

the representations of God and man from which he revolted to be but caricatures, for which he had his own proud impatient spirit not a little to blame; if he had seen how, in the real doctrine of the Atonement, for example, the Father and the Son are perfectly at one in the work of redemption, and he that hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father, and the utmost honouring of law is also the utmost honouring of love; if, again, he had distinguished between the creed and the life of Christians, had counted the harshness, weakness, inconsistencies, stupidity, which he happened to find in good people, only a thing to be expected, and ever to be forgotten in gazing on the beauty of Christ,—his teaching might have been full-orbed and complete, his heart more at rest, and his sermons purged from their traces of reaction against cherished beliefs, and made richer in positive truth,—truth not one whit less human, but more divine. I cannot refrain from quoting the terrible words in which he describes the case of a doubter, which, at the time I am speaking of, was evidently his own. 'It is an awful moment when the soul begins to find that the proofs on which it has blindly rested so long, are many of them rotten, and begins to suspect them all; when it begins to feel the nothingness of many of the traditionary opinions which have been received with implicit confidence, and in that horrible insecurity

begins also to doubt whether there be anything to believe at all. It is an awful hour—let him who has passed through it say how awful—when this life has lost its meaning and seems shrivelled into a span; when the grave appears to be the end of all, human goodness nothing but a name, and the sky above this universe a dead expanse, black with the void from which God Himself has disappeared. In that fearful loneliness of spirit, when those who should have been his friends and counsellors only frown upon his misgivings, and profanely bid him stifle doubts which, for aught he knows, may arise from the fountain of truth itself —to extinguish as a glare from hell that which, for aught he knows, may be light from heaven, and everything seemed wrapt in hideous uncertainty, I know but one way in which a man may come forth from his agony scatheless; it is by holding fast to those things which are certain still —the grand, simple landmarks of morality. In the darkest hour through which a human soul must pass, whatever else is doubtful, this at least is certain. If there be no God, and no future state, yet even then it is better to be generous than to be selfish, better to be chaste than to be licentious, better to be true than to be false, better to be brave than to be a coward.'

This is certainly a picture drawn from personal experience. To many, of course, it will seem,

either a wild imagination and unreality on the one hand; or, accepting it as true of Mr. Robertson, they will conclude from it that he had not, and never had, any spark of the grace of God in his heart. Deeper spiritual experience, however, will reverse such judgments. It is not the shallow, easy-going believer, whose faith, even on its intellectual side, seems to go out like a candle in a night of tempest, and from whom the face of God is hidden till there seems to be no God at all. It is not made by any means plain in the biography, by what means Mr. Robertson regained his mental clearness and calm. Such storm-clouds, indeed, by a hidden law of their own, which is the will of God, do their work, spend their force, and, one scarce knows how, glide away. This, however, was to some extent a new beginning. The season of doubt and tribulation left Mr. Robertson with a deeper knowledge of his own heart and the hearts of others, and a deeper insight into the things of God. Only by such means do men attain to such pathos and power, such skill in striking the deepest notes in the music of humanity, such lightning-like vividness of speech. Mr. Robertson certainly attained to all this when his soul was swept by a wind from the wilderness. One is all the more saddened to find that the agency which had been used to bring about his time of trial mingled with his future

teaching a certain harshness of tone, a certain bitterness of reaction against the school to which he had belonged; and for which, allowing for the negations which are due to this woundedness of spirit and this reaction, I am disposed to claim him still. While he was still on the Continent, he resigned his Cheltenham curacy, and then returned home to seek for work elsewhere. This was found, for a month or two, at St. Ebbe's, in Oxford, where he carried all before him; and then at Trinity Chapel, Brighton, where he entered on his duties on the 15th of August 1847. His incumbency at Brighton is but the last chapter of his life; though it is that one which makes us ask eagerly for all the rest. Here his peculiar teaching was matured, if we may call it mature, in the form in which we have it now. And here were the beginnings of that fame which has sounded its trumpet most loudly after his ear could hear it no more for ever. Here he had scope and freedom at least. A good many of the former worshippers in Trinity Chapel, Brighton, trained in a different school, fled at the very sound of his earlier sermons; but their places were filled at once by an eager, thoughtful crowd. Brighton was a wider world, and with a more varied humanity than Cheltenham. 'He met with men of all classes, whose opinions had been formed and widened in the storm and stress of

London life; and with others whose prejudices were as blind as those of the smallest village in England.' He knew that he would die soon, and determined to work while it was day. His great practical thought was, that 'Christianity was too much preached as theology, too little as the religion of daily life; too much as a religion of feeling, too little as a religion of principles; too much as a religion only for individuals, too little as a religion for nations and the world. He determined to make it bear upon the social state of all classes, upon the questions which agitated society, upon the great movements of the world.' It was a time of singular activity. His published sermons belong to it, and most of the letters which are now printed in his biography. Now, at least, he had friends to whom he poured his very heart out; and he is allowed to speak for himself with a fulness and self-accusing faithfulness, for which we cannot too much thank his biographer. Intense work alternated with intense physical exercise. The sunsets seen from Brighton, and the sea, ever-changing, in its gleaming calm and its tempestuous gloom, were to him a continual joy.

His fresh and unfamiliar statements of truth still fell among people who did not understand them fully. He had much sympathy now, but also much hostility, more pronounced than ever

before. In his crowded audience there were sure to be some at least who came to entangle him in his talk. And the very thought of this, instead of making him more cautious, made him more rash. The same curious interferences with him, especially by ladies, from which he had suffered so much, even while he indignantly resisted them at Cheltenham, still continued. The revolutions of 1848 interested him mightily. They seemed to him in his ardent philanthropy 'a bridal dawn of thunder-peals.' At this time, he lectured on Samuel the prophet, and so laid down the respective duties of kings and subjects, that he was called a Democrat in the unreasoning panic which then prevailed. He was the originator of a Working Man's Institute in 1848, which had a chequered history, and did not survive its originator. In many ways he addressed himself to working men, and anxiously befriended them, till he was next pronounced a Socialist. Happily the day has gone by when such a charge would be made. He excited the hottest ferment, and injured himself most seriously by his sermons, in 1849 and 1852, on the Sunday question. His view of this question is that which disconnects the Sabbath of Christendom from the law given by Moses, and builds it on the two pillars, of the original and universal necessities of humanity, and the Resurrection of the Divine Redeemer.

Men slow to make a doctrinal distinction, were startled, when he carried his theory into practical application, by refusing to petition against the opening of the Crystal Palace on Sundays, and by preaching on 'the religious non-observance of the Sabbath.' In this, more than anything else, may be seen the extremeness of a man stung by rancorous opposition, and tempted by the allurements of paradox.

The last months of his life were embittered by a dispute with the Vicar of Brighton, Mr. Wagner, who used the authority which he possessed to prevent the appointment, as Mr. Robertson's curate, of Mr. Tower, on whom Mr. Robertson had set his heart. The result was that, weak and worn, he had to go on single-handed with his work. For some time past that work had been done at fearful cost. He spent days and nights in terrible pain, as though his head and neck were being torn by the beak of an eagle, or cleft by a sword. Intense mental activity; the bitter sense of isolation in the midst of enemies, which deepened on him to the last; the conflict of his life, not long but hot and fierce, almost without a parallel; these bore their fruit at length in the physical anguish from which he found release only in death. The controversy with Mr. Wagner was at its hottest, when all Brighton was startled to hear that Mr. Robertson had received

his death-blow. His disease was supposed to be an abscess in the brain. The turmoil of his outward life grew quiet and far away as the shadows of death stole over him. His last effort was to creep from his bed to the window, and look out on the 'beautiful morning.' His two sisters, long since dead, seemed to come to him with a crown for him in their hand. He felt assured that he would live in Christ for ever. Between him and all men who had troubled him fell the calm of forgiveness and peace. Again and again the pain smote him, keen and terrible, but it could not bereave him of his patience. The two hours before his death were filled with fearful anguish. 'My God!—my Father!' he cried feebly at intervals; and then when they sought to move him, 'I cannot bear it; let me rest. I must die. Let God do his work.' These were his last words. The storm of physical agony raged itself out; and a few minutes after midnight on Sunday, August 15th, 1853, he died. He was but thirty-seven; his sun reached its highest noon, and then vanished into the great darkness. So he

> 'passed
> To where beyond these voices there is peace.'

I have already characterized his teaching, and explained its peculiar character. It remains only to borrow from his biography some idea of Mr.

Robertson as the multitude saw and heard him in his pulpit at Brighton. We are invited to imagine a high intellectual brow, strongly marked; blue deep-set eyes; a mobile mouth, capable of a most radiant smile; a voice not loud, but with a swell of power and thrill of passion in it; a manner of the quietest, but of singular grace and refinement, and suggestive of force under restraint; the very preacher for an audience of sensitive culture, and yet visibly an earnest man, speaking to, and making while he spoke, earnest men. His utmost popularity and most manifest success never won him from his habitual and painful self-depreciation. The excitement of his preaching left him despondent and depressed—turning wearily from his fellow-men to cling to the bosom of the Eternal Love. He has, I believe, told the story of his own spirit in these sentences descriptive of of John the Baptist, with which I leave him now. 'When the crowd dispersed at sunset, and John was left alone in the twilight, with the infinite of darkness deepening round him, and the roll of Jordan by his side reflecting the chaste clear stars, there was something there higher than Pharisaic forms to speak to him; there were heaven and eternity to force him to be real. This life was swiftly passing. What is it to a man living like John but a show and a dream? He was homeless upon earth. Well, but beyond—beyond—

in the blue eternities above—there was the prophet's home. He had cut himself off from the solaces of life. He was to make an enemy of the man of honour, Herod. He had made an enemy of the man of religion, the Pharisee. But he was passing into that country where it matters little whether a man has been clothed in finest linen or in coarsest camel's hair; that still country where the struggle-storm of life is over, and such as John find their rest at last in the home of God, which is reserved for the True and the Brave.'

VI.

THE DIVINE AND THE HUMAN IN THE BIBLE.[1]

I NEVER think of the inspiration of Scripture, without having my thoughts about it influenced by a parallel between it and another great gospel mystery,—the Incarnation of Christ. It is a parallel, nothing more. I do not make it an argument. But it is strangely suggestive, and, unless I am much mistaken, is well fitted to do what I am most anxious to do, to clear this question from all confusion and misapprehension, and bring it to a definite issue. This holy mystery, but most undeniable fact,—the Incarnation, —which has had its place in the Church's doctrine, and has been cleared and settled for ages in the Church's thought, may serve to point out the place which must be given to the mystery and fact of Inspiration, the region in which its proof is to be found, and its solution attempted, so far as it is solvable and provable at all. This analogy

[1] Extract from a Lecture on Inspiration of Scripture, delivered at Edinburgh, January 15, 1865.

has been all along perceived by the defenders of the Bible. It is suggested by the Scripture itself, which speaks both of Christ, and of the truth concerning Christ, under the name of the Word. But I am not aware that, till recently, the full force and value of the parallel has been discerned, or the analogy carried out in its fulness.

The living Word and the written Word are related to each other as the body to its raiment, or as thoughts to the spoken or written syllables in which they are uttered. But more precisely: the living Word is the God-man, that ineffable Person in which the Son of God is joined to a true humanity. The written Word is the God-breathed or inspired Scripture, in which the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, thinks and speaks through, and in living connexion with, the thoughts and speech of men. Even as the second Person is incarnate in the Jesus of the gospel, so the third experiences a sort of continual avatar or self-manifestation within the limits of time and humanity in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. All this does not affect the relation of the Bible to Christ. He is its theme. In it He is bodied forth, and in it applied to the hearts of men. But strictly, the voice which speaks in this book, the Divine element in the composition of this book, is the Holy Ghost. As the second Person, then, was manifested in huma-

nity, in the body and spirit of a man, so is the third manifested in humanity in the thoughts and words of men. Inspiration is the analogue of Incarnation.

Now, in the case of the Person of Christ, the doctrine of our Church is singularly definite, notwithstanding that it is a statement of an ineffable mystery. It contents itself with maintaining the fact of the God-manhood of Christ without attempting to fathom the mystery that is in it. It ascribes to Christ *Divinity* of one substance with that of the Father, a Godhead in no way inferior to that of the Father, but ever, amidst the lowest conditions of His life on earth, abiding in undimmed and undiminished glory. And it ascribes to Christ *humanity*, true, complete; a true body and a reasonable soul; a humanity perfect still in His divinest moments, true as ever on His eternal throne. And it presents that divinity and humanity as making up one Christ, one Redeemer and Lord, two natures and one Person for ever.

In like manner, I believe the doctrine or fact of inspiration can be stated and maintained. It is this. The book we call the Bible, one book notwithstanding its varied authorship, is Divine and it is human. Divine, with an unmodified, undimmed divinity; human, with a true and recognisable humanity. Divine in every part, and human in

every part. To deny or weaken its humanity, is to imitate the error of the Docetæ, who, in their zeal for the Divinity of Christ, maintained His humanity to be a phantom. To deny or any way invalidate its Divinity, is to imitate the error of the Socinian, to whom Jesus is merely the Man of Sorrows, the chiefest of human teachers, the noblest martyr the world ever saw.

Transfer, now, the conception you have of the twofold Person of Christ, true Divinity, true humanity, married into an ineffable union in Him, to this mysterious book, Divine throughout, human throughout, down to its minutest proposition; whether the pen be that of Moses the legislator, or Moses the historian; that of doctrinal Paul or practical James, the chronologist or the genealogist, the major or the minor prophet, whether the theme be prophecy, history, gospel, epistle, proverb, psalm; whether you find the golden magnificence of Isaiah, or the weeping prophet's tears; whether royal David strike his harp and sing, or more royal Solomon; whether you have the tale of homely life beginning, 'It fell on a day,' or the sublime apocalypse of the unseen;—and you will have obtained a clear and fruitful conception of the inspiration of Scripture.

There are two schools of thought in regard to this matter, between which the analogy of the incarnation will help you to keep the middle

path. The one—not dead and gone yet, though everybody wants to make out that it is—holds what is called the *mechanical* view of inspiration, that is, that the Bible is so altogether Divine, or at least so preponderatingly Divine, that it cannot in any proper sense of the word be called human at all; that the Holy Spirit used men to write down His thoughts and words, because only through the intervention of men could He speak, but with so little concurrence of theirs, so little colour or impress of their individual character and mode of thought, that they were to Him but as the pen of the scribe, the brush of the painter, or the chisel with which the sculptor carves the stone. The other is that of the negative critics, whose zeal for the humanity of the Bible, whose eager study of the characteristics of Paul and John, and the rest, as exhibited in the books they wrote, has tempted them to sink its Divinity altogether, to rob it of its infallibility, to degrade it to the level of a work of human learning and genius, a little more profound and wise than the dialogues of Plato or the plays of Shakespeare.

Think of the Divine Man of Nazareth, a *God* indeed, with continual outflashings of the glory which no man can approach unto, continual suggestions of omniscience veiled and hidden in Him, of omnipotence curbed like a fiery courser, or laid like a child to sleep; and yet a *Man*, with poverty

and weariness, with hunger and thirst, with kindly human sympathies, travelling painfully from place to place, weeping unmistakable tears, born with travail into the world, suffering the pains of death, —and you will be able to think also of a Bible, authenticated throughout with the seal of Eternal Truth. God's very voice, which never spoke a falsehood, whose seeming falsehood must ever turn out to be a profounder truth, and yet, withal, written by Moses in Moses' style, with the idiomatic phrases which Moses used, and the colouring which Moses' history and habits of thought, and nationality and peculiar circumstances must of necessity impart; written by Paul in Paul's style, and by John in John's; and you will delight to recognise the Divine idea in its human dress, you will delight to hear a voice which is God's and no other, and yet human as your own. That holy mystery of the Man who walked among men of old, without form or comeliness to careless eyes, and yet was the very eternal God, will be repeated for you in the holy mystery of this book, which stands on your shelf or lies open before you, a printed page like all the rest, and yet written by God's finger as truly as the mystic writing on the tables of stone, quick with a Divine life, invested with supreme and sole authority, true with infallible truth.

VII.

'ECCE HOMO.'[1]

THERE is a still more recent book on this question, as you are aware, which has attracted, in this country at least, universal attention, and which cannot fail to be always held as a waymark in its history—I mean the book called 'Ecce Homo.' It has met with a very varied reception. There is a division about it in orthodox circles. Lord Shaftesbury, Dr. Pusey, and the Pope have all agreed in emphatically condemning it. With all deference to these high authorities, I am rather inclined to agree with the more patient and cautious orthodox critics, who find in it a defence of, and not an assault upon the truth of the gospel history and the great Christian verities. I may be mistaken in my estimate, and I would speak with caution. The objections taken to it are due, I believe, to a misconception of its somewhat peculiar drift and plan —a misconception not unnatural, but somewhat to be regretted. It is a very common thing, but a thing very cruel and unjust, in judging of a book, to disregard altogether the indications which

[1] Extracted from a Lecture on 'The Historical Christ.'

the author gives of his particular purpose, and to try to condemn him on an issue which is entirely false. 'Ecce Homo' has been held to be a dogmatic treatise on the life and work of the Redeemer, when it is nothing of the kind; but only an ingenious reply to the mythic or legendary scepticism of Strauss and Renan, its main object being to vindicate for the Christ of the Gospels a place in history.

The question raised in all such discussions, as I have already said, is the question of the *origin of Christianity*. The author of this book sets himself to trace Christianity back to Christ. Christ is viewed by him as the founder of the Christian society. Of its peculiar power and life, its pervading spirit, not its theology—that lies outside his plan—he finds in Him the living fountain. All this is commonplace enough. But the originality of the work lies here. The author allows the sceptic to choose his ground—starts with no assumption whatever. He makes use only of that small portion of the Gospels which the sceptical criticism admits to be authentic. He carefully refrains from raising the question of the supernatural in Christ's person and work—views the Lord Himself and the ordinances He instituted, and the law of love to God and man, which He made the keystone of His kingdom, and the spiritual influence which He exerted and still exerts, rigidly from the human side. This is very

interesting though very perplexing, and strangely defective-looking to those who have not the key to it. And the result is this—that from the sceptic's own admissions, he makes out with irresistible force that the story of Jesus of Nazareth is not a myth but unquestionably true; nay more, keeping always to the human ground, and never assuming anything, he so frames his exposition as to shut his reader up to the conviction that this Christ is more than man, that this spiritual influence is a Divine influence, that this kingdom is indeed the kingdom of heaven. Over and over again, he of purpose, particularly at the end of his chapters, betrays the far reach of his argument, the mighty consequences which it enfolds within it.

A book evidently, which, taken as a whole (I admit there may be grounds of intelligent objection to particular passages), will be denounced by those who hold a theologian as denying everything which he does not expressly say; will be without benefit or hurt to the unsophisticated reader, because it will be unintelligible; but to the sceptical class, and to the class not sceptical who are nevertheless familiar with sceptical difficulties, will seem immensely powerful and immensely to the purpose. The author of 'Ecce Homo' has met the infidel on his own ground, and with his own weapons. David has cut off Goliath's head, not with his own, but with Goliath's sword.

LETTERS TO FRIENDS AND RELATIONS.

LETTERS TO FRIENDS AND RELATIONS.

SINCE the biographical sketch prefixed to this volume was in type, the Editor has received some of Mr. Crichton's letters, a portion of which he has now the pleasure to submit. They are of two kinds: the first personal, telling about his work, or pouring out his thoughts and feelings to his college friends; the second pastoral, and pertaining to a high and delicate region of the pastoral office, being words of counsel and sympathy to the sick, the dying, and the bereaved. A few extracts will suffice for the former; the latter must be given entire.

During all his student-days Mr. Crichton had a great love for evangelistic work, and, contrary to the advice of some of his friends, took every opportunity to engage in it. He gave most valuable help in this way at a meeting in the neighbourhood of Holyrood, fostered by a most devoted Christian lady, who, with more insight than some, appreciated his earnest spirit, and continues to speak in the warmest terms of his labours in that

sphere. Writing to her from Kincardine Castle (June 9, 1859), he adverts to some of his studies, and then to his evangelistic labours there. 'I am reading Dr. Chalmers's Memoir, which I ought to have been doing long ago. For some reason or other I did not, and am discussing it just now with intense interest. In the presence of a character so noble and human-hearted, and moreover so spiritualized into earnestness and devotion, I feel more of elevation and of impulse than I remember of getting from any book which I ever read before. With such dispositions and tendencies, he seems one whom I can take for my hero and model.' Referring to his work, he mentions his having been called, in absence of the minister, to preach twice in Auchterarder Free Church. 'I did not break down,' he says, 'but was very nervous. We have some hopes of getting Mr. North for next Sabbath, for he has promised to visit Kincardine Castle for some little time. The Thursday meeting was fuller and more interesting than ever. It fell to me to conduct the third part of the services, and I was followed by two elders of the Free Church. I felt it very solemn, and the richly spiritual prayers of the grey old men of God were exceedingly interesting. The numbers on last occasion were rather over a hundred. I have the congregational prayer-meeting to-morrow evening, so that I shall have a good

deal of work and excitement, but it will soon be over. The school at the townhead has been granted me for Sabbath evenings, and I have hopes of beginning next Lord's day. Speaking God's truth there, as at your Holyrood meeting, is a more hopeful thing than preaching to a sermon-proof congregation. I prayed as I could for the Holy Spirit before and after the services of yesterday, and I know that one or two of the people would be wrestling with God for me and the rest, more mightily than I could do, and there the matter rests now in God's hand, though I feel once and again to-day sore invasions of a faithless conviction that it has been all in vain. Yet God forbid! You say nothing of your Holyrood arrangements, and, as I take for granted that they remain as they were, I shall rejoice if I am spared to meet with the good old folks again.'

In March 1860, writing from Derbyshire, he says:—'It is a very sweet place where I am located just now; interesting in itself, and interesting from the dispositions of the people, who are very eager to hear the truth. I have to preach twice each Sabbath in a chapel attached to Wootton Lodge, which is the name of Mr. Bannerman's residence, to a small audience, consisting of the family, the servants, and other dependants, besides a sprinkling of people from the villages in the neighbourhood, all of which are not less than a

mile and a half or two miles distant. Besides that, I have preaching once a week in a cottage in some one of these villages. We are not so cramped for room as you are at Holyrood, and there comes out a very respectable audience. On one side of me there is an interesting rebellion against the Puseyism of the clergy among the people, who maintain a Sabbath evening service in spite of the attempts of the minister to put it down. I was able to strengthen their hands a little when I was here last spring, and a very powerful effect was produced by a Mr. Dykes, who succeeded me. Perhaps, if I get a little stronger, I may be able to put some new spirit into the thing, for there is plenty of combustible matter, and only the torch is needed to set it into flame. Perhaps Mr. Logan and Mr. Macaulay will pray in the meeting for grace and strength to me, for I am feeling the need of them very deeply just now, and I will pray for the meeting and for them and you privately, though I cannot do it in public. May God be with you, and Jesus Christ be your stay and comforter, especially in the remembrance of your late affliction, and the Holy Spirit, a messenger of life and peace.'

Two months later, he thus refers to the prospect of becoming assistant to the Rev. Charles Brown :—' The prospect of going to Mr. Brown's is not so far off now, and his church and pulpit

and congregation, and the good man himself, loom up larger to me, and indeed occupy a good deal of my thoughts, and that even in dreams, when they and I become involved in miserable and inextricable confusion. There is one thing that consoles me, and that is, that to the providence of God and the kindness of friends, and in nowise to my own importunities, am I indebted for this appointment, and accordingly I find it less difficult to believe that I shall not be forsaken of the Master, or left to my own strength, but that He shall carry me through. You are very kind to prepossess people in my favour by assuring them that I possess so substantial excellencies. I shall certainly endeavour to make good the character which you give me, and endeavour to be as wise and discreet and long-headed as possible, that you may not have these friends complaining of being imposed on. I shall *try*, you know, that being the whole extent of my promise, for I cannot say, I shall *succeed*.'

It may be mentioned here, as I omitted it at the proper place, that at the time when Mr. Crichton received calls from the congregations of New North, Edinburgh, and St. John's, Leith, the congregation of the Free Church at Dumbarton were also anxious to obtain his services.

The following extracts from letters to one of his friends—now the Rev. James Beattie, of Pitcairngreen Free Church, Perth—are given in

illustration of his intense delight in nature. The words seem to have flowed from his pen as fluently as if he had been writing on the most ordinary topics.

From Derbyshire, he writes, March 1859 :—

'About a fortnight ago I was very low indeed, and mentally in a very abyss of despair, out of which there was no friendly voice to summon me. However, I got some tonic medicine, which I have been taking, and I am quite set on my feet again. One day in particular this week, Wednesday, I think, did me more good than anything. I went three miles or so to call on the Vicar of Rocester, on a beautiful, bright, warm day. In coming back, I was directed to a footpath which led me all the way through green meadows by the banks of the Dove. The grass was unspeakably green, and the air laden with a thousand perfumes, and the whole country sprinkled with a white snow-shower of damson-blossoms, and, amidst the awakening life of the world, I, too, awoke, and felt a load rolled from my heart. It was a day of God. Spring had stolen a flower from the summer garlands, and bound it in her hair. April had assumed for one day the warm smile of June. I could think only of one want, that of a kindred soul to expand with mine into ecstatic feelings and measureless grandiloquence. To have you there I would have

given a very great deal. As my only resource, I looked benignantly on the cows as they lay and munched in picturesque repose upon the greensward. There was a look of gratitude and peacefulness in their eyes, of grave dignity also, suggestive of the βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη, and I felt sure that they and I, in our respective heart-dialects, were thanking God together in a temple where the stream contributed its music, and the manifold plant-life its incense, and the cloudless heaven its Shechinah-glory, to incite us to deeper devotion.'

From Kincardine Castle, May 1859 :—' The weather has been lovely. The foliage is bursting out in a delicate greenness. That broad sunshine which I am so fond of is folding the world round with light as with a garment. And the cry of the cuckoo is filling all the woods with a glorious dreaminess. Yesterday evening I went down into the glen for a while to enjoy an almost perfect restfulness, for the Sabbath calm was round me everywhere, and for one little while I felt as though I had ceased to have part or lot in that complex thing which we call " this world," which is feverish and disturbed in its very enjoyments, as though the clay vesture had fallen away from me altogether, and I was clothed in the immaterial raiment of some blessed spirit, whose heaven of calmness had never been crossed by a thought of sadness or of sin. I have only covered and obscured with

many words a feeling which was simple and strong and delicious while it lasted.'

The letters that follow tell their own mournful yet not cheerless tale. They need no preface or comment from the hand of a stranger :—

I.—TO A COUSIN IN SICKNESS.

11 South Castle Street, Edinburgh,
Wednesday, Feb. 15th, 1860.

My dear K.,—It would hardly be seemly in me to send anything so foolish as a valentine to you just now, and so I shall write you a little letter instead. When you are poorly, and not able to go out, you will have more time to be filled up in some way or other, and so I must try what I can do to help you to pass it away. I should like to come down myself instead of writing, but it is scarcely possible, and besides, my visit might not be always quite convenient for your mamma and you. And so, as I can spare a little time this morning, I take up my pen to speak to you as I can by help of the postman.

It is not very easy for one always so healthy and hearty and busy as I am, to know how you feel when you are thus compelled to remain an invalid day after day. But it seems to me that when you are thus left very much to your own thoughts, you must have time to do what we who

live in a perpetual hurry-skurry can scarcely attain to at all. When the noise of the world is shut out from you, it is the very time to listen in the stillness for the voice of God. He loves us every one. He is not far away from any one of us. He is trying to catch our eye and ear that we may look up to Him, and hearken to what He is saying, and know Him for a Friend.

You mustn't be frightened at my getting dreadfully solemn, and not at all funny in this letter. I am very much afraid of playing the minister with you, and setting myself up to preach to you. For your house is one of those delightful places where I can put off my clerical character with my cloak in the lobby, and become quite a boy again, and as one of yourselves. But just now, when you are sickly and weak, and when you are laid by from the most of the occupations and amusements which you have been accustomed to, you must let me put on my grave anxious face, and come in by way of a comforter. I am sure if there is anything which I try to make the object of my life, it is not so much to rejoice with them that do rejoice as to weep with them that weep; that is, to put out my hand to everybody in poverty and distress of any kind, and try if I can make it lighter to bear. And the way to do this, as I know full well, is not to draw their thoughts off from the pain and weakness to any kind of

diversion and amusement, but to get them *to look up*, for it is God, who sends the affliction, who knows best how to soothe it, and who has promised to be a very present help in the time of trouble. A very present help—as near as the doctor is, as near as your father and mother and Maggie—nearer, I should say, than any of them. If you will thus look up to Him, it may cause you solemn feelings—of course it will; but in stead of deceiving you by making you forget your weakness for a little only to feel it more than ever, it will bring you a peace which the world cannot give nor take away.

For God, as you know as well as I do, has come near to us in Jesus; and it's a kind face with which He looks upon us, for it was once sorely marked and furrowed with pain; and so He knows the look of suffering in our faces, and His loving heart bleeds for us when He sees it. It seems a very wonderful thing—too good, indeed, to be true; but I believe it, else how could I ever pretend to have anything to say to anybody of One higher than themselves, and yet very near them, and of a Life to which all the life which we have yet lived is as a sleep or a death? And so, believing it, it is the best and the only thing I can write of to you, for if you will take strong hold upon this truth, this Jesus thus making Himself known, you will find everything about

you grow brighter and more hopeful, and you will be able to rest yourself, weak and troubled as you are just now, in the hollow of God's hand, just like a child gone to sleep in the arms of its mother.

You will find, what I am always finding, for I have to grope on very much in the dark, through sore fightings and fears—you will find that something in you rebels against this Jesus, something won't let you think about Him, but calls your mind off; something makes you really feel towards Him, though you would scarcely own it to yourself, a sort of dislike. Now, to whom else can we go but to Him who hath the words of eternal life? and going, we must just take the rebel heart with us, and say, 'There, we have come, not wanting to come, in spite of ourselves, but we *have* come, or are trying after it as hard as we can. Put out Thy hand and draw us. Destroy that which keeps us back. Unveil to us the loveliness and kindness of thy face, that we may not be able to stay away any more.' But no words of mine about Christ are like His own words about Himself. And so I would have you go to them, for they are not only the grandest and truest words in the world, but there is a power to be given with them, the power of the Holy Spirit, which makes them have an effect on one which no other words of no other book can ever have.

I don't advise you to turn up your Bible at random, for you will most probably get little good from that. But let me recommend to you the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th chapters of John, which seem to me the dearest and most beautiful chapters in the Bible. They are not even John's words, but Christ's own. Read them slowly and often, for there is a world in every verse. Read them, asking Christ to make their meaning plain to you; their meaning, not for people in general, but for you in particular. And I am sure they'll get round your heart somehow, and carry you quite out of yourself, and kindle up in you thoughts and feelings which shall abide with you for ever.

For my own poor share in the matter, I'll have a little time this evening, which I shall spend in praying for you. Ah me! my prayers for myself are often miserable and fruitless affairs; but when I pray for you, perhaps God will help and hear me, for He loves the good and gentle better than the dark and stubborn spirits like mine. I shall ask that you may have Christ for your Teacher, and do you ask the same for yourself.

You will forgive me that I take it upon me to write to you in this way. I believe that the Master is very good and kind, and I try to be a faithful servant, and so I must speak a word for

Him whenever I can. And then, dear Katie, is it not the best thing for you, and me, and all of us; the best thing, especially, for you when you are poorly, and need all the comfort both in mind and body that anybody can minister to you?

I hope you will feel better day by day, and get quite strong again. You won't be the worse in the end for your trouble, if you get to see God's hand and hear God's voice in it. Perhaps I shall get down in the beginning of the week to ask for you. Your papa is so kind, that I would come very often if I could. I hope neither your mamma nor he will take my letter amiss; and may it be some little comfort, dear Katie, to you. I have written in so small a hand, as usual, that it will be rather a bother to read. Kind regards to everybody: papa, mamma, Maggie, Chrissy, Willie, and the boys, and believe me your affectionate cousin, ANDREW CRICHTON.

II.—TO THE SAME.

FREE INVERBROTHOCK MANSE, ARBROATH,
Wednesday, April 18, 1860.

MY DEAR K.,—I can't come to see you just now, and so I shall write you a few lines, which Maggie or your mother can read to you, if it would hurt your eyes very much. I should have

done so before, but when one comes home, there are so many visits and compliments and congratulations, which take up a good deal of time. I write, hoping that you will be no worse than you were when I saw you last, or rather, I should say, that you will be a good deal better. It has been so severe weather, very hard upon delicate people, that I have quite trembled for you when I shivered in the wind myself. Mamma has felt it very much, and has picked up very slowly, but yesterday and to-day she has changed very much for the better. While I am writing of these general matters, your papa, who took so hearty and kind an interest in my concerns, will be glad to hear that I have to-day received my certificates from the Board of Examination, which bears, not only that I have not been plucked, but that I have passed with some measure of respectability. For those other matters, dear Katie, of which I have spoken to you before, as I could, I can help you in no way now, but by speaking of you to the Father who seeth and heareth in secret, and I can assure you that I do not cease to pray for you that you may have rest and quiet in your poor weak wasted body, and that especially your heart and spirit may abide in perfect peace, being stayed upon the Lord. Since I came home I have been studying the 23d Psalm very carefully, because the Presbytery have prescribed it as the

subject of a lecture which I have to deliver before them, and I thought of you once and again when its rich and blessed meaning unfolded itself before me. It makes God known to us in a light most beautiful—beautiful at all times, but especially so in times of weakness and sorrow. It tells of the rest which He can minister to us, of guidance, of comfort in the dark valley, of nourishment with that food by which our souls may live, and of a favour from Him and a communion with Him which shall last for ever. Truly we think that any one who can use the words of this Psalm, and take to himself this shepherd-care of God, must be blessed indeed. Perhaps you and I feel that we have not come to that yet, and that we are far from feeling in our sorrow and weakness the arms of God's love around us, keeping us up. And yet sure it is, as sure as that God cannot lie, as sure as that the Bible is true from beginning to end—sure it is that we may attain to such a faith and love and hope as David had. The same way is open for us as for him—the one way—the old way—the unfailing way by the cross of Jesus. We can't get into favour with God, we can't grow into such a state of mind that we may take to ourselves the words of the 23d Psalm, otherwise than by naming before God the name of Jesus, and making our appeal to His most precious blood. And this you may do, and, I trust,

have done and are doing. If, when you try it, you feel your sin such that you are somehow held back from it, then remember that test which I sometimes, when my soul gets very dark, hold into with a death-grip—'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin,' and also that which was given as most truly the character of Jesus—'This man receiveth sinners.' For I want you very much to feel that you are not in yourself such a one as God would like you to be. A sense of sin is not to be dreaded and fled from, but rather nursed, that is, if it do not make you despair, but bring you to see that being a sinner you are the very sort of person whom Jesus has died to save. 'The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which *was lost*.' But again, if, when you try to think of Jesus in a trustful living way, as if you were just getting Him into a corner of your heart, something comes, you don't know very well what, which shuts your eyes from seeing Him, and drives Him out of your head altogether—then it is time to ask, oh! so earnestly, for the Holy Spirit, who comes like a strong friend to beat off the enemy. Say something like this—'O Heavenly Father, Thou art more willing to bring me to Thyself than I am to come. Thy enemy and mine is keeping me back. My hard heart is keeping me back. Oh, for the sake of the love and the death of Jesus,

come Thou by the Spirit to my help. Draw me, and I will run after Thee with willing feet.'

I am sorry, dear Katie, I am a poor adviser. I think sometimes that God has taught you Himself already more than I can teach. Those whom He loves, He rebukes and chastens. And though you cannot build any plea for His favour on your sufferings, yet in the midst of them, you will remember that Jesus suffered, that He knows every pain and trouble of yours, that He is compassionating you, and thinking of you to an extent you do not dream of, and that He who has broken will be the first to bind up. We must all look for death as a possible thing to occur very soon to every one of us. You have come to know that you are specially required to look it in the face. I cannot trust myself to write of what makes me feel so sad. Cry out in the quietness of your own soul for Jesus, and if you are taken away from us, the voice which you will hear, though we do not, will be the voice of the dear and loving Saviour calling you to Him, as the Eastern shepherds call by name to the sheep of their flock.

Now, I shall kneel down and spread out this letter before God, and pray that He will comfort you a little with it, and make a sense of His love come over you like a sweet glint of sunshine.—Your affectionate cousin,

ANDREW CRICHTON.

III.—TO THE MOTHER ON HER DAUGHTER'S DEATH.

FREE INVERBROTHOCK MANSE, ARBROATH,
Monday, May 28, 1860.

MY DEAR MRS. B.,—Since I heard of Katie's death, I have had it in my mind to write to you, but I thought you would be in such a bustle last week and the week before, that it would be better for me to write when you should be quieter. I saw the letter which you sent to Maggie B., and I could see from it how bitter the cup was which you had to drink, and I could fancy how the feelings of Mr. B. and Maggie and the rest would be no less painful.

It would be very much out of my way to play the part of a comforter, with bits of commonplace consolation about resignation to the will of Providence, and so on. Rather would I write as one who has shared in the loss, and say what things seem to me ever matter of thankfulness amidst the pain and sorrow of it all. I have been recalling all the circumstances which I remember about poor Katie. I remember the time when I met Maggie and her at St. Andrews, and how I liked her quiet ways, and how I admired her then in the attractive simplicity of her girlhood. And then I see her again when her face and figure grew so beautiful and womanly. And

last of all, she comes up to my memory, wan and wasted as she was, and with such white thin hands, when I saw her last. We could ill spare such a one as she was, so fair and good and gentle, but 'the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away.' The edge of your sorrow will get blunted by time, but the dear and beautiful girl whom you have lost shall be held in everlasting remembrance. Those of a family who have died are never wholly buried and gone; but I think the others, and especially father and mother, do not fail to feel that they are still theirs, never to be utterly taken from them, always to be thought of with a peculiar fondness and tenderness as not so far out of reach. And their names, those familiar names which bring up so many sweet recollections, are ever used with reverence, as if the departed spirit would make answer to them from behind the veil. So we say—

> 'Named softly as the household name
> Of one whom God hath taken.'

Such a name is Katie's to you now, and when you use it, you reach out from the present to take hold upon the past; yea, you reach out from the present as it is here, to take hold upon the present as it is *yonder*, where she has gone to abide.

How grateful to God I was when I read in your letter of the peacefulness of her end! Somehow I always had a strong faith that it

would be so. I could not judge by anything she said, but it came over me to feel in that way I did not know how. Having been able to bear testimony in all her illness, by the patience and quietness of her spirit, she was able to bear it with the words of her lips at the most testing time, and so to leave us with the blessed assurance that all is well. You know now the secret of her gentle uncomplainingness, and who it was that made her pillow smooth and her heart so calm. It was so natural for her to give way to grief a good deal on the brink of separation from those she loved, but the Lord evidently brought her, through less of struggling and darkness than fall to the lot of some of us, into a trust and hope in the atoning blood of Christ. And we know whose hand she had hold of at the last, so that when she went away, and left you all broken down with grief, it was to go home and be for ever with her Lord. 'In His presence is fulness of joy; at His right hand are pleasures for evermore.' The joy, the everlasting blessedness, is hers,—the sorrow and weeping are left to you. She will not forget us, left to go on in the dark; and in the full light of the Saviour's face she will think of us sometimes. But her thoughts of us must all be kind and pleasant, and so let ours be of her.

Indeed, she seems to me almost to be envied.

I sometimes feel that if I could welcome death as she did, I would gladly die to-morrow, though there are so many ties which are hard to break. These are but sorry joys and triumphs which we ever attain in this world, and I think we all long sometimes for *a perfect rest.* To that she has attained. She has escaped the sadnesses which shall come on us, the evil that is in the world, and all those vain trifles which so misguide young ladies often, and lead them through quite as much of vexation as enjoyment, to heart-breaks and disappointment and death, wherein the Comforter, whom they have neglected all their days, leaves them alone and in despair. She might have grown a good and noble woman, but the Lord hath taken her. Yet is she your daughter still, and I cannot believe that a father's or a mother's love will be put an end to in this world or the other. I trust God will be satisfied with the sacrifice, and give you great comfort in those who are left, and make of the lost Katie a link of gold to bind you all together in the warmest love and dutifulness, and cause her name to be a sacred keepsake in the family, so long as there is any one of you left upon the earth.

I expect if all is well to see you in the beginning of the week after next. Kindest regards to Mr. B., and Maggie and Chrissy, and the rest.—Yours affectionately, ANDREW CRICHTON.

IV.—TO ANOTHER COUSIN IN SICKNESS.

12 Arniston Place, Edinburgh,
Saturday, April 4, 1863.

My dear John,—I have been very much concerned about you, since I heard from Arbroath that you were ill, and home at St. Andrews. Though it is Saturday night, yet as I am pretty far advanced with my work for to-morrow, I cannot refrain from at least beginning a letter to you. Your sister Maggie very kindly wrote me a nice letter when I was ill, and I prized and enjoyed it so much, that I cannot but try to make some slight requital by now writing to you. The experiences of my own illness, the fact that my feet too have stumbled upon the dark mountains, make me enter into the sufferings of others with a vividness of realization and a keenness of sympathy such as I had not before. Especially must I feel interested in yours, as we are a sort of twin-brothers, and in very many respects as like each other as possible. And it is somewhat of a coincidence that we should both of us be cast into the fire about the same time.

My turn came first, and when I hear of your illness, I feel as though you were going along a dark road, in which I have gone so far, and about which I know something now. There is a certain

strange dim 'border land,' as the hymn which your sister sent me happily calls it, in which it is well to have been, in which there are things to be seen and known which never could be seen and known aright in the midst of the common world. What I remember you will now feel,—that strange vagueness and dimness which overhangs all things, and that inability to think much and continuously even of the things which most need to be thought of, which both of them arise from the weakness and weariness of one's sick body.

A good part of my illness at the worst of it was a mere blank, a sort of half stupor, in which things were all confused together, and which has left scarcely a trace in my memory. When I think of that, it is much impressed upon me that it is a sad mistake to look to sickbeds and dying-beds as places for repentance and for making our peace with God. Woe 's me ! a sick head and an enfeebled frame, and the utter languor which envelops one, both body and spirit, have quite enough to do with themselves.

But if one knows the Lord a little, and I am sure you do, He is indeed very kind and wise, and feeds the weary spirit with little tender bits as a mother feeds her child. The best preparation for a sickbed or sickroom, I think, is to have one's mind well stored with Scripture, to have the Word of God dwelling richly in us. There

are long hours, maybe, in the night, which are wondrously enlivened with texts which come to one's remembrance. Out of the stores of memory God chooses that particular word of His, which it is best to think about, and it comes darting across our mind we scarce know whence or how, perhaps to wound us like a sharp arrow, perhaps to enlighten us like a glint of sunshine. I am merely mentioning to you what I found to be the case with myself. Oh! how pat to one's case the words of the Lord are which come to us in that way, to search and try us, if there be need to look to the foundations, to cheer and encourage us, if our heart and flesh be fainting and failing. I am sure you have your own share of them, and of course they will not be just the same as those that were guiding stars to me. One that caused me much painful exercise was that verse of the 90th Psalm: 'Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, *our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.*' My sins, especially secret sins, were discovered to me, and I thought what a terrible blaze of light that is in which they are discovered to God,—far intenser than the blaze of a million suns could be,—the light of His countenance. But then over-against these countless accusers, I was able to see, I think, more than ever I did, the perfection and sufficiency of the surety-righteousness of Jesus, and especially those wonderfully

free offers of this righteousness—'Ho! every one,' 'Whosoever will,' etc.—rang home to my very heart with a sweetness so joyful and painful, that I lay in my bed and cried till my face was all stained and red with weeping, when the doctor came, and I was quite ashamed. It must be a wide door, I thought, that would let in a sinner like me, but surely this door is wide enough,—'Whosoever will,' 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.'

I hope to hear from your sister Maggie how you are. I do wish I could come and see you, but I'm afraid I would be a trouble at such a time. You are never out of my mind, and I try to remember you at family worship, and in my own personal devotions. The latter half of this letter is written on Tuesday, April 7. We are all well. Kindest regards to Maggie, James, and yourself.—Your affectionate cousin,

ANDREW CRICHTON.

POETRY.

THE pieces that follow, with many others, were all written before Mr. Crichton entered on the ministry. He hardly ever found time for anything of the kind, except a few fugitive verses during his active life.

THE SEASONS OF A LIFE.

I.—SPRINGTIME.

I.

A JOY, a joy in the soft wind's breath,
A laugh on the sunny sea,
A smiling green on the verdant mead,
And a carol from every tree.

Gone is the Winter's breath of ice,
Gone is his robe of snow,
There's a quickening life in the bright green earth,
And a warmth in the winds that blow.

Above are the sun and the sailing clouds,
Above in an azure sky;
And they smile to the smile of the ocean's face,
As its waves go dimpling by.

Merrily, merrily sang the lark,
As it soared in the heavenly blue ;
Merrily, merrily the fairy bark
Like a white-winged sea-bird flew.

Fresh is the fragrance of bursting buds,
Fresh is the gay young green ;
And the meadows all daisies and buttercups
Gleam in their golden sheen.

A joy, a joy in the heart of man,
In the fresh young life of Spring ;
And he echoes the mirth of the joyous birds,
Whose hearts are so full—they must sing.

II.

Yonder a little streamlet strays,
Across the grassy plain,
Fresh from a crystal fount set free
From Winter's icy chain.

Happy the little song it sings,
Like the captive a freeman now,
As he walks on this earth with a freeman's step,
And its soft airs fan his brow.

I hear on its bank the gleeful laugh
Of a merry child at play,
As she tosses her wild-flowers into the stream,
And they float on its ripples away.

Red was her cheek and rosy her lips,
Like cherries on the Autumn tree ;
Her heart was merry, and her eye was bright,
And her step was light and free.

She smiled, and the teeth 'mid her parted lips
Were richer than ocean's pearl,
And the wavy hair flowed over her head,
In its wealth of golden curl.

She has woven a garland of bright spring flowers,
And wreathed it amid her hair,
And she bends o'er a calm clear pool in the stream,
For her image is shining there.

Is she a child of this sinful earth ?
Or dropped from some brighter sky ?
I almost thought, as she glided away,
That a spirit of heaven passed by.

Laugh on, merry maiden, in the joy of thy youth,
Till the days of thy childhood fade,
For thy merry heart and thy head must ache
On a thorny pillow laid.

II.—SUMMER.

I.

The Summer has come with its light and life,
Its song-birds and its flowers,
With a sunny smile over heaven and earth,
Through the long bright golden hours.

High up in his palace of snow-white clouds,
In his power and his glory alone,
The sun looks down in his majesty,
Like a king on his royal throne.

He smiles not alone on the proud and great,
On abodes of pleasure and sin;
But he seeks for the hut of the low and poor,
And flings a sunbeam in.

The joyous earth in its robe of green,
Flashed back his beaming smile;
And the woods and glades with their choristers
Poured forth a hymn the while.

The rosebud bowed with its load of dew,
Like a weeping maiden's head,
Till the sunbeams kissed the tears away,
And it blushed a deeper red.

With a light glad heart on the summer morn
Each man goes forth to his toil;
How often unmindful of God above,
How often unthankful and vile?

How often rebuked by the soaring lark,
As its song of praise it weaves;
By the thankful joy of the bending corn,
Of the brooks and the murmuring leaves.

II.

I looked for the little maiden again,
With the hazel eye and the sunny hair,
She has ripened and grown to a womanly grace,
The fairest among the fair.

A queenly step and an eye of light,
A broad and thoughtful brow,
A cheek which the lingering breezes kiss,
And lips still as rosy now.

Over an arched and swanlike neck,
Her hair lay scorning clasp or band,
Like the moonlit waves of a summer sea
Lipping the smooth bright sand.

Her feet scarce touched the dewy turf,
As she skimmed o'er the velvet lawn,
And the opening flowers rose up as she passed,
Like the angel of the dawn.

Her heart was pure as the lily white,
Washed by the dews of morn,
But her frame, like the lily, weak and frail,
By the rude winds bent and torn.

Love ruled her heart with a gentle sway,
Like the moon o'er the ocean's tide ;
And it breathed in each act of her gentle life
A blessing on all beside.

There was one in the bloom of his youthful prime,
To whom that young heart was given ;
Yet not alone, for her love went forth
To a Saviour-God in heaven.

III.—AUTUMN.

I.

Soon must the Summer roses fade,
Soon must the green leaves fall,
And an icy blast from the frozen north
Breathe a cold blight over all.

The fields have waved with their golden grain,
And the ripe fruit blushed on the tree,
And a ruddy light when the sun went down,
Glowed on the crystal sea.

The flowers are pale, and cold, and dead,
Each tender hue and form,
And they sink on the scene of their joy and pride,
Scathed by the reckless storm.

Now drops from each bare and naked tree
The leaf all crisped and sere;
And the wind moans through its boughs at even,
With a sound of woe and fear.

I hear the wild-birds' gathering cry,
Ring through the startled air;
As they wing their way to a sunnier sky,
And a land ever bright and fair.

The sun sinks lower in the heaven,—
The sky is less deeply blue,
And the ruddy flush in the west at even
Fades to a sombre hue.

Pale nature's life was ebbing fast,
'Mid storms from the cold north hurled,
And shuddering winds that moaned as they passed
The dirge of a dying world.

II.

Dim is the light of her hazel eye,
Pale is the rosy cheek,
Wasted and wan is the queenly form,
And the trembling limbs are weak.

The ring of her merry laugh is hushed,
And her pulsing heart beats slow;
And she fades with the fading flowers and leaves,
And the year that hastes to go.

So doth the lily droop at even,
When the sun has sunk to rest,
And the glittering stars in the dark-blue heaven
Roll to the distant west.

Though weary and hot is her aching head,
I hear no sigh nor moan,
But a voice that speaks in words of cheer,—
Hark to its silvery tone!

'I leave a world of pain and woe
For a better home on high,
Where no farewell is murmured low,
And there never breathes a sigh.

'Methought when sank the last red sun
In a sea of living gold,
That my flight to heaven had now begun,
And its gates aside were rolled.

'And then there came to my raptured ear,
On the soft wind borne along,
A strain that I stayed my flight to hear,
The sound of a seraph's song.

'Farewell, ye friends whom I fondly love!'
And she spoke each dear one's name,
'For I heard the call to my home above,
When that heavenly music came.'

IV.—WINTER.

I.

Cold is the wind from yonder hill,
Dark are the clouds in yonder sky,
The trees have been stripped of their leafy pride,
And the flowers lain down to die.

Swiftly the howling storms rush in,
With snow and hail and sleet,
And the cold earth lies in a frozen sleep,
Wrapped in its winding-sheet.

No more shall the merry woodlands ring
With the song-birds' joyous tone,
The shivering redbreasts fear to sing,
And are left to die alone.

Hear the wild waves in passion tossed,
As they lash the dark-grey shore ;
And the sailor's cry from his vessel lost,
Is drowned in the tempest's roar.

The birds have fled to a sunnier clime,
And the wild beast sought his lair,
And man has cowered where the glowing fire
Breathes in the chilly air.

Down from his home in the frozen north,
Descends the snow-crowned king,
And he bids the spirit of the storm speed forth
O'er the world on his gloomy wing.

Yet the earth is not dead, but living still,
And shall rise and grow green again,
And the flowers shall bloom, and the murmuring rill
Bound to the glassy main.

II.

Hushed is each footfall in yon home,
For its life and joy are gone ;
See the sad face and the tearful eye,
And the death-white curtain drawn.

Soft the death-angel glided in
Where gleamed one glimmering light,
And the lonely watcher heard him pass,
Like a breath of the summer night.

There was no frown on his heavenly face,
No grief in his glowing eye,
For he came to bear to a realm of bliss
One who did not fear to die.

He laid one hand on the marble brow,—
He breathed one breath on the cheek,
And he fled with the soul o'erflowing now
With a joy that no tongue can speak.

Slowly and sadly down the street
Moves on the funeral train,
With the deep dull tread of retiring feet,
And the mourner's look of pain.

The winter's snow shall melt away,
From a grave where the grass has grown,
And the daisy shall beam like the eye of day,
By the mound and the mossed headstone.

Till the flower that once bloomed in the garden of earth
Shall be twined in the garlands of heaven,
And the light that died with the morning's birth
Shall burn like the star of Even.

KINCARDINE.

A PLACE where Spring delights to dwell,
And Summer weaves a fairy spell,
And Autumn lingers long:
Where trees all day long droop and dream,
Listening the murmur of the stream
And the full tide of song.

Where waters babble in the noon,
And babble louder 'neath the moon
When all the world is still;
While out and in they flash and play
By branches shaded from the day,
Beneath the greening hill;

Through deeps and shallows, grassy steeps,
And still pools where the troutlet sleeps
Around the castled height;
By Malcolm's ruined fortress old,
And gayer modern turrets, rolled
Out, out, into the light.

Its sights and sounds are ever dear,
Dear while I dwell beside them here,
And feel their beauty now;

But dearer even shall they seem
In the soft luxury of dream,
When sorrow shades my brow.

Not from its woodland loveliness
Kincardine gains its fairest dress,
Or not from that alone;
Kind hearts have blest and summered me,
And left me aye a memory,
Sweet music in its tone.

God sent me here, I know it well,
Awhile in rest of heart to dwell
Beyond the din of strife—
Far from the city's dusty street,
From weary hearts and weary feet,
And toils of painful life.

Here must I gird my armour on,
Here the brave heart's strong harness don,
Here watch the rolling sea;
Then when its waves break o'er my bark,
When winds are loud and waves are dark,
I calm within may be.

No luxury of cradled ease,
No life of sun and summer breeze
Be e'er to my soul given!
A strong arm in the thickest fight,
A brave heart in the darkest night,
A day of rest in heaven!

THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS.

By the rude bridge across the brook,
Shaded by ash-trees from the rays,
A lady sat and sweetly sang
'The light of other days.'

The world seemed greener then than now,
And, sunlit, wooed my loving gaze—
Sweet airs breathed round her as she sang
'The light of other days.'

To look away e'en cost a pang
From what seemed then a heavenly face,
Her voice thrilled through me as she sang
'The light of other days.'

The light of other days has faded,
Even then it trembled on the wing;
And now my path of life is shaded,
And I that song may sing.

The sunshine comes to-day, the storm to-morrow,
One night's brief rest alone between,
We wake, our eye-lash moist with sorrow,—
It is not aye a dream.

But one hour now and then be given
To ponder over bygone woe,
When Hope and Love which built to heaven,
Were laid in ruin low.

These hours have their own meed of gladness,
We cannot brood and weep always—
Calm hearts remember without sadness
'The light of other days.'

THE SONG OF GOD'S WORKERS.

My brothers! oh, my brothers!
The light is burning low;
There comes a stilly murmur
Which bids us rise and go—
Go where the golden harvest
Inviteth us to reap,
Go where the tireless enemy
Awaketh from his sleep.

My brothers! oh, my brothers!
Our heritage is grand
With rich and saintly memories
Which crowd the martyr land,
With tales of bypast fervour
When men were strong to pray,
And many Jacobs wrestled
Till dawning of the day.

My brothers! oh, my brothers!
It is an earnest hour,
And the dry bones are shaking
Beneath the word of power.
Shall we grow sick and weary
In midst of toil and pain,
Though our earth-sky be dreary
With winter gloom and rain?

Shall we not gird us bravely
Up to the fight of God?
The foe is great and fearless,
And his sword's gleam is broad.

Oh! we are faint with running,
Come, Holy Spirit, come,
And give us faith and patience,
For heart and lip are dumb.

O give us faith and patience
To hasten on and on,
To break the spell of sinfulness
And God's heaven-armour don;
To lift God's own sun-banner,
And wave it proud on high,
As warriors strong in purpose
To conquer or to die.

Oh, oft our heart feels breaking,
Where is the Gilead balm?
Where is the King-physician
To make the fever calm?
Where is the arm ne'er shortened?
Hear ye the mocker's laugh?
Oh! God can smite the evil,
And scatter it like chaff!

My brothers! oh, my brothers!
We choose a noble toil,
God clothe our souls with holiness,
Let us our robe ne'er soil;
Keep us in hours of weariness,
Light us through haunting gloom,
Save us from all self-seeking,
Give us aye work, strength, room!

MUSINGS.

THE Sabbath eve dwells long and calm,
The tired world will not let it die,
For like the music of a psalm
It charms all pain and unrest by.
There speaks a voice of God on high
Through the grave stillness of the woods:
Peace, peace! to every pained cry,
Which wins the soul from darkest moods,
To calm like that which dwells in the star solitudes.

It is a time to dream of days
Which come when these have passed away,
Of work and walking in the ways
Of Him who shed truth's starry ray,
To love, to hope, believe, and pray
For the bright breaking of a dawn
Which ushers in the perfect day,
When gloom and want and sin have gone,
And through the crystal vault God's sunless light has shone.

On the dark nature's cloudy veil
Hope paints a fairy world of joy,
Where furrowed cares and sorrows pale
Come not with vexing and annoy;
When the brave years I may employ,
Enkindling life in human souls,
Full-hearted as a gladsome boy,
And winning men from earthly goals,
To climb and cling where heaven in endless beauty rolls.

A vain but yet a harmless dream,
The portion of an untried heart
To which all life must glorious seem ;
Seen not in fulness but in part,
Though we the pangs of woe may start,
Bending the summer of my life,
Failure a sunken gloom impart,
Chagrin cut with its poisoned knife,
And all those stinging ills with which the years
are rife.

I hope, I hasten fearless on,
As if a crown awaited me ;
God help when human help is gone,
God comfort in all misery !
Fain would I, if His will it be,
Live a life great and true and brave,
A life to men a memory,
Spent all this wild sad world to save,
Till the low summer wind shall breathe across
my grave.

THE SAINTED DEAD.

They rest, those wanderers of the world,
Amidst the heavenly joy and calm,
And hear, while ages are unfurled,
The music of a deathless psalm.

We mourn ; but they can mourn no more ;
The last earth-tear is wiped away,
While falls along that heavenly shore
The sunshine of the perfect day.

We toil, but they for ever rest,
Pillowed upon the peace of heaven,
No heart grows sick within their breast,
No hope is e'er to darkness driven.

We fear; but what have they to dread,
Amidst the Shepherd's pastures green,
Where streams of endless life are shed,
To wander through the heavenly scene?

We hope and trust, but they can see
Their loved One even face to face,
And pluck from off the healing tree
Its leaves and fruit of richest grace.

We love, and love with trembling soul,
Lest what we love leave us or die,
But they are loved while ages roll,
And ne'er forsaken left to sigh.

We think with tears of their lone sleep,
But we should weep and pine, not they,
To us is given the midnight deep,
To them the cloudless sheen of day.

And yet we cannot choose but feel
That they remember us even now,
And some soft shade of thought must steal
For us across the painless brow.

O may we journey on in hope,
To end our toil and share their rest,
Through times when we must stoop and grope
To starry mansions of the blest!

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